



HOSPITAL TRUST FINED £500,000

BY JAMES DRIVER-FISHER

THE former trust that ran Stafford and Cannock hospitals has been fined half a million pounds following the deaths of four elderly patients.

The now defunct Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust had previously admitted a string of management and system failings.

The case followed the deaths of Lillian Tucker, aged 77, Ivy Bunn, 90, Edith Bourne, 83 and 89-year-old Patrick Daly between 2005 and 2014. Judge Christopher Haddon-Cave told Stafford Crown Court: "The underlying causes of these deaths have been management failures at the very top of this organisation. The vulnerability of all four victims was known."

"The fact this case has been linked to similar management failings shows these were systemic issues within the trust."

"I hope today brings some closure and finally draws a line under the past, and that Stafford and Cannock Hospitals can open a new and bright chapter and become the hospitals that their dedicated staff and local communities can once again be proud of."

The former body, which was wound up in November 2014 and replaced by the University of North Midlands NHS Trust, was also ordered to pay the Health & Safety Executive's £35,512 court costs. Judge Haddon-Cave said the fine and costs would be paid by the Government.

Listened

Mark Hackett, the new trust's chief executive, said: "It is clear to me the historic problems at Mid Staffs prevented Stafford Hospital from recruiting and retaining staff, which ultimately had an effect on patient care."

"Despite all this I believe the legacy of Mid Staffs on the NHS will be safer staffing and a change in the culture of the NHS where staff and patients are better listened to."

Mid Staffs Trust Special Administrator Tim Rideout said: "On behalf of the trust I would like to apologise unreservedly for the shortcomings which have come to light."

The latest sentencing comes after Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust was fined £200,000 for failing a diabetic patient who died in its care after the trust pleaded guilty to health and safety failings. Gillian Asbury died at Stafford Hospital in 2007 aged 66 when she was not given insulin despite being diabetic.

Ron Street, 81, of Hednesford, who was a long-time friend and carer, said: "The thing that angers me the most is that the Health and Safety Executive has the power to prosecute managers and directors who failed to ensure that safe systems were in place."

"It sticks in my craw that no one individual or individuals are being held to account. It seems idiotic to me that it is the taxpayers who have to pick up the costs of these fines."

MODEL'S FIGHT WITH TYCOON HUSBAND OVER SON



Staffordshire model Sian Mitchell and her mega-rich husband Angus – their marriage broke down 19 days after their son was born

THE grandmother of a model banned from leaving the United States with her baby has said it is 'heartbreaking' not to have her home at Christmas.

A California court order forbids Sian Mitchell from returning home to Great Wyrley with her son as part of divorce proceedings with her multi-millionaire hairstylist husband Angus Mitchell.

She gave birth to Dylan earlier this year but was handed divorce papers by the chef at their Los Angeles home 19 days later.

Now Mrs Mitchell's grandmother, Pauline Morgan, has said that she has had to 'pay the price for falling in love'. Mrs Morgan, from Love Lane, said she has not seen her granddaughter for 15 months. "All Sian wants to do

is to come to the UK for a holiday, yet these legal battles are forbidding her to leave," she said. "It has all happened so quickly, we are all in shock. They seemed incredibly happy together and even were due to have a separate marriage over here in November."

"They seemed perfect together. He would even call me Nan," she added. "It's heartbreaking. She's paying the price for falling in love." Because of the ban, Mrs Mitchell's family are yet to meet the new arrival. Her mother Debra has flown out to be with her.

The bitter split has led to questions in Parliament. South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson presented a petition to the Commons calling on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Government to offer as much

support as possible. He said: "This is an incredibly sad case, and I have asked the Government to do all it can in offering consular advice to Mrs Mitchell and her family."

"Her family in Great Wyrley are desperate to meet the baby for the first time and concerned for Mrs Mitchell who is, after all, a young woman caught up in legal proceedings in a foreign country."

Mrs Mitchell went to school in Brewwood, and was a member of the girl band ICandy which made it through to the boot camp of X Factor in 2010. She is now in her mid-20s.

Mr Mitchell, 45, was born into the legacy of late legendary hairstylist Paul Mitchell and lives in Los Angeles. It is believed he met Mrs Mitchell while she was modelling in the US.

PETITION

Tougher sentences call on Josh attack

HUNDREDS of people have signed a petition calling for the 'unacceptable' sentences handed to two men who left a barman fighting for his life following a vicious attack to be lengthened.

James Robb and Alistair Douglas, both keen amateur boxers, were found guilty of inflicting grievous bodily harm on Joshua Morgan in March 2014.

The open letter to Judge Jonathan Gosling demands stiffer sentences on the pair.

One online petitioner described the length of their prison terms as 'disgusting'.

● Disgrace – Page 4

COUNTRYSIDE

Protesters to rally over Chase sell-off

PROTESTERS fighting to save parts of Cannock Chase from being sold off are to hold a rally in the new year.

The campaigners won a significant victory last week when county council bosses held off offering the land to private developers. But they say they cannot afford to let up the pressure.

Supporters are being invited to attend an event on January 2 to plan further action. Organiser Paul Woodhead said details of the event would be finalised in the next few days.

CRIME

Two Cannock homes burgled in 24 hours

ALCOHOL, cigarettes and electrical goods were among items stolen when two Cannock homes were burgled within 24 hours.

Thieves got into a house in Lilac Avenue early on Thursday and ransacked the kitchen cupboards before taking cigarettes, a bottle of whisky, three bottles of perfume and a 10in black tablet.

The previous day, a property in Bromley Close, Hednesford, was broken into between 2pm and 10pm. A record deck, two televisions and a laptop were stolen.

Anyone with information should call 101 using reference 61 of December 17 and 817 of December 16 respectively.



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Former Methodist minister dies aged 73



Rev Elaine Woolley

A FORMER minister of Trinity Church in Hednesford has died aged 73 after a lengthy battle with Alzheimer's Disease.

Rev Elaine Woolley, who also served at Chads Moor Methodist Church and Florence St Methodist in Hednesford, was taken into New Cross Hospital with chest pains on Sunday, December 13, and died peacefully the same day.

Her eldest daughter Jane, who was by her side, said: "Mum was extremely well cared for by the staff at Waterside House, Wednesfield. Sadly her health deteriorated and I am grateful to the staff at New Cross Hospital who made her last

hours as comfortable and pain free as possible." Rev Woolley was a trailblazer for women, being one of the country's first female Methodist ministers, and spent time alongside Mother Teresa at the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta.

The former midwife, who was also a Chaplain at RAF Stafford, and her husband John also lived in The Gambia in West Africa where they preached and worked extensively in the community.

During the 1990s, Rev Woolley, originally from Stoke-On-Trent, served at Methodist churches in Pelsall, Shelfield and Walsall Wood where she is fondly

remembered. Stuart Pinches, who was a member of Christian youth group Searchers at Pelsall, said she was 'an inspiration to many people, especially the people of Pelsall'. "She inspired us as young people in all sorts of ways," he said.

Rev Woolley is survived by husband John, three children and two grandchildren. Her cremation will be held at 2.15pm on Wednesday, January 6 at Bushbury Crematorium, Wolverhampton, with a thanksgiving service at Trinity Methodist Church, Hednesford, at 3.15pm. For details contact A J Sellman Funeral Directors on 01543 502322.

Addiction clinic gets the go-ahead despite outcry

A DRUG treatment centre is to open in Cannock town centre after planning bosses gave the go-ahead despite a storm of opposition to the move.

The news has been welcomed by service bosses, and health chiefs say it will have a 'huge impact' on the lives of recovering addicts. Cannock currently has the highest number of drug and alcohol addicts in the county.

The plan sparked a 1,000-name petition from people vehemently opposed to the centre, to be based in the former post office in Church Street, which closed in January.

The scheme will be run by Addiction Dependency Solutions (ADS), with Staffordshire County Council, to help people undergoing treatment for alcohol, substance and steroid misuse.

Chris Judge, service delivery director for ADS, said he was 'really pleased' that the application had been successful.

The centre will also provide support on mental health issues, housing, prescribing clinics, and support for family and carers.

Treatment

It is being promoted as the first step towards accessing the ongoing recovery services offered by the BAC O'Connor Centre in the town. County council health chief Councillor Alan White said: "We shouldn't stigmatise those who are actively seeking help for their addictions. Instead we should be supporting them in their treatment and quest to get into recovery. The One Recovery Service is a tried and tested service."

Latest figures show that 474 people in Cannock Chase are currently accessing drug and alcohol treatment services – the highest in the county.

Across the UK, Cannock is in the worst 25 per cent of areas for deaths directly due to alcohol. The area is also in the top five per cent for alcohol-related hospital admissions for people under 18.

In the 12 months up to September, 165 people in Cannock successfully completed treatment with One Recovery. Chris Judge said the focus of One Recovery was not only the individual but the 'much wider recovery' of relatives, friends and community. "The new premises in Cannock will allow us to deliver on that aim," he said.

Parents' fight 'is just beginning'



April Keeling and John Meek say they are still searching for answers after their three-year-old boy died unexpectedly

'We have not grieved for our son yet, we are still fighting'

Those are the words of 29-year-old Cannock mother April Keeling who is still searching for answers after her three-year-old boy died unexpectedly at Stafford Hospital.

There will be a new inquest on Jonnie Meek, who passed away within three hours of being admitted to the hospital on August

11, 2014 after attending a routine appointment.

But consultant paediatrician Dr Martin Farrier, who is investigating the case, has concluded it is likely he died after having a reaction to new milk feed – as the family suspected all along – and not pneumonia which was originally recorded by a coroner. The verdict is set to be quashed but even that might not be enough

for Miss Keeling or Jonnie's father John Meek, 42, who said questions surrounding his son's death kept him awake at night.

The couple, of Bevan Lee Road, believe staff missed vital warning signs. Miss Keeling said: "Mentally I can't move on. Even if we have another verdict we will still be in the same situation apart from people knowing we were telling the truth."



Jonnie with mother April

Prison for cheat who gave advice to suspects

A CON artist who gave legal advice to benefit fraud suspects while cheating the system himself has been jailed.

Darren Matthews claimed he could not walk more than 'five or six yards' without discomfort but in reality was working in a salon and performing in karaoke competitions. The 44-year-old fraudulently claimed £26,000 over a seven-year period after saying he was unable to perform simple tasks, such as putting his socks on, without assistance.

He had told the authorities he had arthritis in knees, hips, wrist, elbows, back and fingers but he was exposed after being secretly filmed striding unaided into Cannock Jobcentre to act as the legal representative for someone being quizzed about another benefit scam.

His salon was put under surveillance, and Matthews, of Hawkesmoor Road, Stafford, was seen cutting hair, walking unaided to deposit money at a bank and 'play fighting'. YouTube footage of him playing the piano was also discovered.

Matthews originally received payments for a 'minor disability' but his condition had rapidly improved by 2007, Cannock Magistrates Court heard.

The father-of-five claimed he had sent letters to the Department for Work and Pensions to let them know his condition had improved and he assumed they had been received. Matthews told the court he was 'embarrassed' but maintained he had never intended to cheat the system.

Following a trial, he was found guilty of failing to notify a change in circumstances and was jailed for 26 weeks.

Man is confirmed dead at work site

A 48-YEAR-OLD man has died after an incident at an industrial premises near Penkridge. Emergency services were called out last week to Acton Gate to reports of a man with serious injuries.

He was confirmed dead at the scene, with police officers liaising with the Health and Safety Executive.

A statement from Staffordshire Police said: "We received a report of an incident at a distribution centre at Acton Gate, Stafford, shortly before 6am on Monday. The body of a 48-year-old man was found on the premises.

"There are no suspicious circumstances, and his family have been informed," the statement added.

The police would not confirm whether it was Argos in Acton gate where the body was found.

Experts on hand to help slimmers

NUFFIELD Health Gym in East Cannock Road, Hednesford, is hosting a Meet Our Experts weight management event on Tuesday, January 19.

The event aims to help people stick to their new year's resolutions. For details, visit nuffieldhealth.com/weight

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Towns are chosen for on-the-beat initiative

A GROUND-BREAKING Staffordshire police neighbourhood network is being trialled in Cannock and Rugeley.

The aim is to cut out excessive form filling, freeing up officers to better patrol their beats.

The new, more 'joined up' system will also ensure clearer and swifter communication between officers and the local community, bosses say.

Cutting-edge mobile technology will be at the centre of helping make police officers more visible in communities across the county, according to Staffordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner.

The new prototype is based in Cannock and Rugeley, which were selected to test the new Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) system.

The team includes uniformed officers, detectives, investigative officers, police community support officers (PCSOs), police staff and colleagues from partner agencies.

All officers in the NPT have been given new mobile data devices so they can deal with incidents out on the street, take witness statements, carry out stop and searches, complete crime scene examinations, and report missing persons without the need to return to the station.

Staffordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis said: "This prototype is part of an approach to reduce a case being handed over multiple times, which creates inefficiencies and reduces individuals' accountability."

System to save £1m approved

A NEW finance system which will save taxpayers £1 million over four years has been approved by Staffordshire councillors.

The county council's cabinet approved plans on Wednesday last week as well as approving a tendering process to see if the current system that runs the payroll for staff and related administration personnel could be delivered by a new, lower-cost one.

The new finance programme is expected to produce annual savings of £250,000, after start-up costs have been deducted, and will be made available to the county's schools, which are also expected to make a saving with the system. The results of the tendering project will be assessed before any decision is taken.

Fire alert over hover-boards

STAFFORDSHIRE firefighters are warning people of the potential fire hazards associated with hover-boards.

It comes after Trading Standards seized 15,000 unsafe devices that had been purchased in the UK.

Marathon man takes on new challenge



Mark Vaz - 'parents are an inspiration'

A WORLD record-breaking marathon runner has chosen to support an adoption charity as he bids to become the first man to complete 400 marathons in a year.

Mark Vaz, aged 32, from Penkridge almost doubled the previous world record of 52 consecutive marathons when he completed his 90th marathon in as many days on October 4.

He is now hoping to enter the record books again, this time by running 400 marathons in 365 days - more than one marathon a day.

The current record is 239 marathons in a year.

To put his challenge into context, Mark aims to run a total of 10,488 miles, almost the same distance as flying from London to Sydney, Australia - 10,553 miles.

He decided to represent Adoption UK as his charity of choice as he was adopted himself.

Mark said: "My brother and I were both adopted so adoptive parents are an inspiration for me."

"We both owe a lot to our adoptive parents as we've been very fortunate. I don't know what my life would have been like if I'd stayed in care. Some-

times it can be quite hard to believe in yourself if you're adopted so I hope I can inspire other adopted children to get active when they see what I'm doing."

For his first challenge of completing 90 marathons in 90 days, he raised funds to be split between the Tommy's pregnancy charity, and Katharine House Hospice in Stafford.

Mark's wife Tammy has suffered seven miscarriages, and he said Tommy's had been a huge support. Anyone wishing to sponsor Mark can do so at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/9090

John Anslow's drugs pair have £250k seized

A CONVICTED killer and his wife who were part of drugs kingpin John Anslow's gang have had more than £250,000 of assets seized from them by the police.

A confiscation claim launched by the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit centred on Anslow's uncle David Harrison, who is originally from Bilston.

It was decided that £625,361 of his assets were funded by crime as part of what police describe as an ongoing investigation into the activities of Anslow, aged 35, and his gang.

Harrison is serving life for the murder of Richard Deakin at his home in Meadow Street, Chasetown, in July 2010. Police say he was also a key member of Anslow's drug empire, and was also jailed for 12 years in September 2012 following a separate conviction for conspiracy to supply cocaine and cannabis.

Harrison's wife Julie Anslow, 61, was also given a confiscation order after it was determined she benefited to the tune of £100,000 via her husband's cash, police said.

Murder

West Midlands Police said the pair would have to pay back £251,265 and stand to lose their marital home in Folkestone. That figure is less than the £625,361 total as he no longer owns that much in the form of realisable assets, police said. The seizure included £26,765 in cash that was found in a safe at their house.

Harrison, 66, used a sawn-off shotgun to kill 27-year-old Mr Deakin as he lay in bed at home in Chasetown. Harrison fled in a Corsa driven by Darryl Dickens. The pair were caught, and during a six-week trial at Birmingham Crown Court in December 2012, jurors found both Harrison and Dickens guilty of murder.

Harrison was sentenced to life, to serve a minimum of 37 years, and Dickens was also given life, to serve a minimum of 30 years.

Anslow, originally from Tipton, was charged with Mr Deakin's murder days before being sprung from a prison van by an armed gang. At the time, he was awaiting trial on drugs charges. After being captured, he was sentenced to seven years and two months after admitting conspiring to escape from custody. The sentence was added to the 22 years he was serving for conspiracy to supply drugs, a verdict handed down in his absence in 2012. Last year he was acquitted at Woolwich Crown Court of any involvement in Mr Deakin's death.



Eveline James has helped to raise funds for the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal by knitting and selling poppies with her friends

Knitted poppies boost appeal

POPPY maker Eveline James has helped to put the Royal British Legion on track to meet its £41 million fundraising target.

With the help of her friends at a Wednesday night sewing class and the Rugs and Mats stall in Cannock Market, she started knitting the poppies in October. She says she was surprised by the interest they generated and has started to knit poppies for 2016.

Eveline's efforts raised £50 for the Poppy Appeal.

Alison Bates, the RBL's community fundraising officer for South Staffordshire, said: "With the support of Eveline and many other generous individuals we hope to meet our Poppy Appeal target of £41 million."

"The Legion's work is entirely dependent on the public's generous support, we thank Eveline and her customers for helping us raise as much money as possible."

Proceeds from the Poppy Appeal go directly to The Royal British Legion's work providing support for anyone serving in the British Armed Forces, or who has previously served, and their families.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Superfast reaches 70,000 properties

SUPERFAST Staffordshire - the fibre broadband partnership led by Staffordshire County Council and BT - has made the high-speed technology available to 70,000 homes and businesses across the county.

Alrewas, Audley, Creswell, Fazeley, Flash, Heath Hayes, Perton and Wombourne are among the latest communities to 'go live'.

People can follow the progress of the Superfast roll-out via the Superfast Staffordshire website at www.superfaststaffordshire.co.uk and on Twitter @superfaststaffs and Facebook.

Hospital puts in plans for signs

PLANNING applications received by Lichfield District Council include:

Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Trent Valley Road, Lichfield - retention of 37 various signs relating to car park management.

Land adjacent The Crown Inn, Uttoxeter Road (A513), Handsacre - outline application for the erection of up to 88 dwellings, commercial/community unit of 80 square metres allowing A1, A2, A3, B1 or D1 use and associated works.

64 Cannock Road, Burntwood - extension to existing dropped kerb.

Church offers lights tribute

A CHURCH is giving people the opportunity to sponsor its floodlighting.

The idea is to mark a special day, perhaps in memory of a departed loved one, or to mark someone's anniversary or birthday. For a donation of £25 towards the work of St Michael's Church, in Brereton, the building can be beautifully lit up.

Anyone interested should contact Rev George Holding at the start of the month before the date they would like to commemorate.

Don't mix drinking with cooking plea

CHRISTMAS revellers are being urged to avoid cooking when they return home after a night out.

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service also advise resisting the temptation to drink alcohol before cooking Christmas dinner. The warnings come after statistics showed that most accidental house fires start in the kitchen.

Many of these incidents resulted from people becoming distracted and leaving food unattended while on the hob or in the oven, the service said.

Arrest over images

A CANNOCK man was arrested after police swooped on his property and discovered indecent images of children. Officers from Staffordshire Police executed the warrant on Thursday morning. The man is the latest suspect to be detained under the force's Operation Safenet.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



YOU really must excuse the older generation for not joining the kids in punching the air in celebration as Tim Peake begins his tour of duty on the International Space Station. One newspaper's science writer, who looks about 12, trills that this is "a giant leap in British space exploration." Let's keep it in perspective, eh? Major Tim is 250 miles high. In 1969 we watched man land on the moon which is 250,000 miles away. In 1971 and 1972 astronauts used the Lunar Roving Vehicle. That's right, kids. More than 40 years ago, blokes were driving a car on the moon. Back then we assumed that by 2015 we'd have colonies on Mars, but the money ran out. So while a 250-mile hop into orbit is as courageous and inspiring as ever, let's not fool ourselves. The giant leap into space is still on the drawing board.

I AM always wary of complaining about meals, thanks to the TV series, Friends. You may recall Rachel (Jennifer Aniston) describing how one moaning customer got a little something extra in his meal. She called it a "sneeze muffin." And in response to the latest furore, one blogger reported: "I paid my way through college working as a kitchen hand in a well known restaurant. I know what happens to the food of unreasonable customers before it gets served to them. I wouldn't complain and then eat the replacement dish if I were you." You have been warned.

WHAT is it with ghosts in TV dramas these days? In River (BBC1), the detective was haunted by his dead colleague. In The



Bridge (BBC4) a cop is haunted by his missing, presumed dead, wife and kids. And then Luther (BBC1) returned this week and blow me if our hero (Idris Elba) isn't chatting with the shade of his murdered buddy Justin (Warren Brown). Shakespeare would have loved it but how odd to see so many ghosts in the 21st century.

THE British Veterinary Association warns that the fad for feeding dogs and cats on vegetarian food could damage their health. That may well apply to dogs who tend to wolf down anything you put in front of them. But cats are fussy. Once denied its red meat, your moggie may turn into something quite unexpected – a pedestrian. If you won't feed Tiddles what she wants, there is always some sucker down the road who will. Next thing you know, Tiddles is living three streets away, under the new name of Fluffy and has entirely forgotten you, and your nut puree.

THE latest reports suggest that most owners who try to turn pets into vegetarians do so because they have moral objections to meat. So why not buy a guinea pig?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Single punch ruling let thugs off hook



James Robb

PROSECUTORS downgraded the charges against two amateur boxers who attacked Josh Morgan because medical reports could prove only one punch – despite a defendant admitting he hit the 20-year-old twice.

Amid public outcry at the sentences, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has defended its decision as police released images of attackers James Robb and Alistair Douglas for the first time.

Robb and Douglas were sentenced to three years and 27 months respectively, after admitting grievous bodily harm but will be out within months because of the time they spent electronically tagged on remand. They had been charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm with intent which carries a maximum of life imprisonment but that was dropped and the lesser charge was brought, carrying a maximum of five years in jail.

Stafford Crown Court was told Robb hit Josh twice. A CFS spokesman said: "The medical report initially suggested there were three to five punches, but a subsequent report stated that we could only prove one punch – the defendant did admit to two quick punches, but even this was not sufficient to take it up to intent."



Alistair Douglas

Prison sentences are a disgrace say family

By Rob Gollidge

THE family and friends of Josh Morgan have described the sentences given to the 20-year-old's attackers as a 'disgrace'.

Josh suffered a fractured skull and brain damage in an unprovoked attack in Cannock last year.

He is now limited to moving his head and forearms and can attempt to pronounce only single words.

But his attackers, keen amateur boxers James Robb and Alistair Douglas, from Cannock, will be released from prison within nine and two months after being jailed.

Josh's mother Clare Simpson said: "We think the sentences were a joke. When we were told that a lesser charge only carrying a maximum five-year prison sentence was going to be made we were gob-smacked. We thought how on earth was that going to be long enough for what happened."

Devastation

The next stage after what happened to Josh is death. The whole thing was disgusting. It was a disgrace." The Chronicle's sister paper, the Express & Star, has launched a Justice for Josh campaign, and an online petition calling for the prison sentences handed out at Stafford Crown Court to be extended has been signed by hundreds of people.

One of those who signed the petition was Suzanne Hooson from Cannock. She said: "Josh is my son's best friend and we have seen first hand the devastation it has caused to Josh and his family. The sentence is not enough, our justice system needs to change."

Lee Sumner also signed the petition. He said: "Unfortunately I was one of the doormen who kicked the pair out of Bank Bar in Cannock town centre the night they did what they did to Josh. They were cocky and arrogant."

John Rowlands, from Cannock, said: "Trained boxers assaulting a young lad should be jailed for a lot longer. They were trained for God's sake, trained to do damage."

How pair's attack wrecked Josh's life



Josh Morgan was left brain damaged

AFTER finishing his shift as a barman at the Shoal Hill Tavern, Joshua Morgan headed into Cannock town centre with his friends.

In the early hours of Sunday, March 9, last year, the 20-year-old was refused entry into Silks nightclub in Mill Street.

He was not drunk and was in good spirits. He walked into town and across the Backcrofts car park behind Poundland.

Fractured

That was where he was crossed paths with drunken amateur boxers James Robb, aged 23, of Langdale Green, Cannock, and Alistair Douglas, 26, of Longford Road, Cannock. In an unprovoked attack, Robb punched Josh twice in quick succession. He fell to the ground and suffered catastrophic injuries.

He suffered a fractured skull, swelling and bleeding to the brain. Robb and Douglas were then seen by a passer-by dragging Josh across the car park.

One of them was seen slapping his face to bring him round. Douglas was heard to say: "What are we going to do now?" They told the passer-by that they had just



Police at the scene of the attack in Cannock

found him. Douglas later ran away but Robb waited with the passer-by for paramedics and continued the lie.

Robb was arrested the next day and made up another lie: "I was on my way home when this guy approached me. I hit him on the chin before he had a chance to hit me," Stafford Crown Court was told.

Josh can communicate only by eye movements and is limited to moving his head and forearms. After spending months in hospital, he recently returned home. He now needs round-the-clock support.

The court heard that Robb and Douglas were initially charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm with intent, carrying a maximum of life imprisonment, but the prosecution opted for a lesser charge with a maximum penalty of five years.

The pair admitted inflicting grievous bodily harm. Judge Jonathan Gosling said the attack had 'destroyed' Josh's life. He said: "Joshua's prognosis is desperately poor. His life has been destroyed."

"He is entirely dependent on round-the-clock care, he cannot speak, he cannot eat, his movement is extremely restricted, he lives in fear of complications and infections," the judge added.

First two to get Stephen bursary are announced

A KARATE black belt and a talented drama student have been announced as the first winners of a bursary set up in memory of Stephen Sutton.

The £2,000 cash prize will be to be shared by pupils from Stephen's former school, Chase Terrace Technology College, to allow them to pursue their interests in two very different fields.

Karate champion Megan Preece, aged 13, a member of the England squad, has represented the country in European competitions, winning more than 70 medals including a bronze at the 42nd European Wado Karate Championships. The bursary will help towards her goal of competing at next year's European Championship in Luxembourg.



Stephen Sutton

Rebecca Fisher, a 15-year-old singer, dancer and actor who performs in professional productions at Lichfield Garrick, hopes to attend a top London theatre school.

The bursary was set up by Burntwood Town Council in memory of Stephen whose bucket list inspired a £5 million fundraising movement for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Town council chairwoman Pam Stokes said: "I was amazed but not surprised at the breadth and quality of talent shown by local young people."

Ceremony honour for JCB chairman

THE boss of engineering giant JCB has been made an honorary fellow of one of the country's leading professional bodies for his 'huge impact' on UK manufacturing.

The tribute to Lord Bamford came from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers at a ceremony in London after more than 50 years in the industry. The association's president Professor Richard Folkson said: "This is a very well deserved honour, recognising the huge impact Lord Bamford has made." A fellowship is the association's highest honour.

Lord Bamford began his career in 1962 with a two-year engineering apprenticeship at Massey Ferguson in France before joining JCB at its global base in Rector. He has been chairman since 1975.

Firefighters rescue woman from home

FIREFIGHTERS rescued an elderly woman after finding her unconscious on the floor of her smoke-filled home.

Crews were called to Cedar Avenue, Brownhills, at 11.42am on Tuesday last week. The pensioner was taken to Walsall Manor Hospital.



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Tuesday 29th December 8.00am-5.00pm
Wednesday 30th December 8.00am-7.00pm
New Years Eve 31st December 8.00am-5.00pm
New Years Day Closed
Saturday 2nd January 8.00am-5.00pm

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'Check the timetable' plea on rail alterations

LONDON Midland is reminding passengers to check before travelling over Christmas and New Year.

Reduced timetables will be in operation on a number of routes on Christmas Eve. The frequency of services will reduce from 1pm. The last trains from major towns and cities are often very busy so passengers are advised to travel earlier where possible.

In addition, Network Rail is carrying out improvement works in the Stafford area. Buses will replace trains over the holiday period affecting the London-Crewe and Birmingham-Liverpool services on December 27 and 28. London Midland will be not be operating any train services on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Other timetable changes between Christmas and New Year include:

December 28 – fewer services between Birmingham and Rugeley Trent Valley, and three trains per hour between Redditch and Lichfield Trent Valley via Birmingham.

December 29 to 31 – fewer services between Birmingham and Rugeley Trent Valley; Birmingham-Liverpool services will be hourly; three trains per hour between Redditch and Lichfield Trent Valley via Birmingham.

January 1 – most of the London Midland network will run a Sunday timetable; improvement works affect Euston-Crewe services until 4pm with rail replacement coaches in operation between Stafford and Rugby. Birmingham-Liverpool services will operate hourly. January 2 – normal Saturday timetable.

Arriva unveils its holiday schedule

ARRIVA is running bus services in Staffordshire to special timetables over Christmas and New Year.

Changes in Staffordshire during the holiday period include:

Christmas Eve – normal Thursday bus services will operate with last buses around 6pm; Christmas Day – no services; December 26 – generally, no bus services will be operated.

December 27 and 28 – Sunday service; December 29 and 30 – Saturday service; New Year's Eve – Saturday service with last buses around 6pm; January 1 – no bus services; January 2 – Normal Saturday service.

Sunday, January 3 – normal Sunday service; Monday, January 4 – normal services resume.

Visit www.arrivabus.co.uk

School's treat for pensioners

SENIOR citizens from Penkridge, Coven and Brewod enjoyed a Christmas party at Wolgarston High School.

Sixth formers at the school helped to run the annual event which involved 'fun, food and festivities'.

A caring community all year round

OUR year in office so far has been a wonderful experience with so many memories stored away for the future.

Not only have we received a warm welcome from many local organisations, it has also been a great honour to be part of the city's traditions such as the Greenhill Bower, Dr Johnson's Birthday Celebrations and of course the Sheriff's Ride.

These and many other events were enjoyed by ourselves and the large numbers of people from Lichfield and those further afield that attended them.

All this is a timely reminder of just how lucky we are to be part of such a wonderful community – caring,



A seasonal message from the Mayor of Lichfield Councillor Andrew Smith, left, and the Sheriff of Lichfield Mr Mike Sheldon



ing, sharing and welcoming; the essence of Christmas. Our experience is that Lichfield manages to do this all year round. This is shown even more by

the great generosity of the people attending our charity events. We have already raised thousands of pounds for our two charities, Lichfield First Responders and Macmillan Cancer Support, including an exceptional amount at the recent Mayor & Sheriff's Charity Ball.

We thank you again for your generosity in supporting these causes, especially at this time of year.

The city has a great tradition of giving generously to the less fortunate and once again you have exceeded yourselves.

We would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

High hopes for play area at £2.2m park

THIS unique bird's eye view shows the newly revamped children's play area at Hednesford Park which is undergoing a massive makeover.

The aerial photo was taken during the official opening ceremony of the play area and shows adults and children taking a look around the site.

The end of the £2.2m revamp of Hednesford Park is edging ever closer.

The play area comes complete with swings, slides and even a zip-wire.

Cindy Faulkner, a member of the Friends of Hednesford Park, said: "Everyone had such a wonderful time at the opening day, from the youngest kids to the oldest parents."

"The children opened the park, and they had free reign to go on anything they wanted, which was beautiful to see."

"When they had to go back to school, it was time for the adults to have their turn."

"I went on the zip-wire, the swings and the slides, so I am happy to say they are well-built."

Volunteers

"It was just a great day, we are all so excited to have our park back and better than ever."

The revamp comes after the park was awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2012, with the money being used to fund the works.

Volunteers from the Friends of Hednesford Park helped Cannock Chase Council in applying for the funding, with the revamp of the park set to be complete by 2017.

As part of the revamp, a skate park has been created on site, as well as a car park, and tennis courts have also been installed.

Meanwhile, work on a new pavilion is scheduled to continue until the spring.

The pavilion, which has provided changing rooms for sports teams which play at the park, will have a new ground-floor cafe and community room when the work is finished.

The building has been rebuilt in the past after being targeted by arsonists, and it is hoped the facility will usher in a new era at the park, bringing a whole host of new visitors.



An aerial view of Hednesford Park on the day of the official ceremony for the opening of the play area

NEWS IN BRIEF

Public meetings to discuss gypsy sites

PUBLIC meetings are being planned for the new year to discuss gypsy sites in South Staffordshire.

Essington Parish Councillor David Clift wants to meet with residents to discuss the South Staffordshire Local Plan Site Allocations Preferred Options document.

The document is proposing an extension to existing gypsy site and one new pitch in Essington.

A consultation on the proposals has started and will close on February 15. Dates for the meetings have yet to be arranged.

Players to put on a comedy thriller

WHITTINGTON Players will be performing 'Tiptoe Through The Tombstones', a comedy thriller by Norman Robbins, in the new year.

Described as a glorious spoof and a worthy sequel to 'A Tomb with a View', the production features sinister goings on at the reading of a will.

The show will be performed at Whittington Village Hall on February 4, 5 and 6.

Tickets are £7 each and a bar is provided. Start time is 7.30pm with doors opening at 7pm. For tickets contact Kay on 01543 490355.

Foodbank asks for donations

REGULAR weekly donations of tins and packets of food are urgently required by the Rugeley Foodbank.

All food must have a sell-by date of at least six months ahead. Donations can be left at any of the town's parish churches, where it will be collected by representatives from the Rugeley Foodbank, or it can be taken to the foodbank itself at Rugeley Community Centre, in Burnthill Lane, Rugeley WS15 2HX. The opening hours are 2pm-4pm on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Vandals in attack on life-saving machine

VANDALS put lives at risk by smashing into a publicly accessible cabinet containing a defibrillator in Lichfield.

Based outside Lloyds Bank in Market Street, the cabinet protects the defibrillator but was badly damaged leaving the heart reviving equipment open to the elements.

As a result of the damage, which occurred overnight on Thursday, December 10, the defibrillator was moved inside the bank, meaning it was only available during business hours.

Police in car crackdown

POLICE in Cannock have launched a crackdown on drivers using illegal fuel and other motoring offences. Three drivers were found to be using red diesel meant for agricultural use. They face a fine of at least £500. Officers were joined by revenue and customs inspectors in the operation.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



Tesco is washing its hands of bag fees

A COUPLE of weeks ago I got on a train from Wolverhampton to Birmingham. It was filthy, passengers were packed like sardines into the drab, cramped carriages. Somebody had drawn a phallic symbol in the thick coating of dirt on the windows.

And the operator responsible for this service? It was one of the many services run by Deutschebahn, the German state-owned rail operator. They run quite a lot of trains around the West Midlands these days. Some of them very badly.

Bear that in mind next time somebody tells you that nationalisation is the solution for all the ills on our railways.

ACCORDING to a recent report, encouraging people to wash their hands for 30 seconds at a time could prevent up to 25,000 deaths a year.

Apparently the average Joe's hands are a haven for filth, bacteria and faeces. The study, which has prompted Government and medical bosses to launch a national hand washing campaign, reports that three in 10 commuters have poo on their hands as they go about their daily, ahem, business. Now remind me. Why did I never join the Freemasons?

GREAT news for supporters of the carrier bag charges. According to Tesco, use of plastic carriers has dropped by 78 per cent since the new rules came in.

The company says it has exceeded all expectations, with many people asking for a "bag-free delivery" when they order their shopping online. There have also been one or two rumblings about "changing people's attitudes". Of course there have. The great and the good are never happier than when they are changing people's attitudes.

And you know what? That's exactly what I was thinking when I was stumbling around town with my arms full of shopping, stooping every few yards to pick up the pork scratchings, sweets, bath products and tulip bulbs that I was carrying back to the car.

Still, on balance, I still think this is marginally preferable to the alternative, which seems to be walking around with your pockets stuffed with 'bags for life' and looking like Roy Cropper.

One thing did strike me though: doesn't it make life much easier for shoplifters now people are wandering into stores carrying goods they have bought elsewhere? And more to the point, doesn't it make life incredibly hard for shop assistants who, on top of their normal duties, now have to decide whether the customer's arms were really that full of shopping when they came through the door?

Did anybody give any consideration to that problem when deciding whether to introduce the new law? Thought not. Still, as long as it changes people's attitudes, that's the main thing.



Commission chairman, Baroness Butler-Sloss in her office



Rev Neil Robbie at Holy Trinity Church, in West Bromwich



Rev Canon Andrew Wickens, of St James The Great, Eve Hill

Are we now facing a crisis in Christianity?

Leading Christians in the region have been standing firm in the wake of a landmark report. Report by LISA WRIGHT

"TO say this is no longer a Christian country is taking it a bit far, but I would say it is fair to say it is a very inclusive country."

These are the words of the Reverend Prebendary David Wright from St Peter's Church in Wolverhampton, in the wake of a landmark report on religion – which found Britain was no longer just a Christian country.

The report published by the Commission on Religion and Belief in Public Life said there had been a 'general decline' in Christian affiliation – with two in five people now identifying as such – coupled with a move away from mainstream denominations to evangelical and Pentecostal churches.

Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism have also overtaken Judaism as the largest non-Christian faiths in Britain.

Among the 'striking' trends, the report said, was a rise in the number of people who identified as non-religious – now amounting to almost half the UK population.

But Baroness Butler-Sloss, who chaired the commission, said issues such as the Paris terrorist attacks and the banning of a Church of England advert in cinemas showed religious beliefs are still central to society.

However, now church leaders from across the region maintained that Christianity was still an important faith in this country.

"Britain is a country where there remains a significant Christian presence," added Rev Preb Wright.

"A significant Christian influence and where significant numbers of people are still practising Christians or would trace their affiliations, although may not be active, but it is also a country that embraces other faiths.

"We are a multi-faith society built on firmly Christian faiths."



Rev David Wright, at St Peter's Church, who has commented on a landmark report on religion

While Neil Robbie, the vicar at the Holy Trinity Church in West Bromwich, said: "Our public institutions, government structures, education system, health care system and justice system. These have all been built over a millennia by Christian thinkers.

"It's not as simple to say we are no longer a Christian nation because people don't believe. For us not to be a Christian nation there would have to be a dissolution of these systems and institutions.

"Secular thinkings are squatting in the house that Christians built and what they are saying is look at the house we built, when actually what they are doing is demolishing it.

"We don't want to give credit to people who have shaped our society."

Janet Bailey, chief organiser at St Luke's Church in Cannock, who celebrated their 900th anniversary this year, said: "We recog-

nise here at St Lukes that a lot of people don't have a faith, but we still have a very strong congregation and do not feel that is going to change any time soon.

"I don't agree or disagree with what has been said but we live in a multi-cultural society and this is something we have to accept, and really should applaud."

And Rev Rob Farmer, of St Mark's Parish in Sheffield, said: "I can understand why people do say we are no longer a Christian country but I believe everybody has some kind of spirituality in them.

"We have a very healthy congregation and upon engaging with people who come to St Mark's, we are told they thoroughly enjoy the experience here and that is all we can ask."

The report also said the number of Church of England bishops who sit as peers in the House of Lords should be cut to make way for leaders



Rev Rob Farmer, of St Mark's in Sheffield

of other faiths. Rev Canon Andrew Wickens, of St James The Great, Eve Hill, who is chairman of Dudley Interfaith Network, said he believed the report 'merits study'.

He also said the recommendation to reduce the number of Bishops in the House of Lords needed to be considered as the country becomes more diverse.

"I welcome anything that contributes to debates about the place of religion in our common life so I am sure that this is a report that merits study by people. The Church of England has sought to serve the whole of the local community – we offer support to all.

"We have bishops in the House of Lords. It's only right and proper that the whole of our society is represented. At a national level it makes sense that the people who represent us are taken from broad section of society," he added.

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Banking on firm's growth



Gareth Jones, centre, of Yorkshire Bank, with, left, finance director Richard Luckett and managing director Mark Littleford, both of TFM Superstores

TFM Farm and Country Superstore has opened its newest outlet in Penkridge thanks to a new funding package from Yorkshire Bank.

The family business has grown substantially since its initial business offering in the 1970s, specialising in farming machinery.

Now, the superstores cater for agricultural, construction and country living customers, selling everything from power tools to bread bins, boasting more than 16,000 product lines.

The expansion of operations was made possible by a six-figure fund-

ing package put together by Yorkshire Bank, which has supported the local family business for over a decade.

Mark Littleford, managing director of TFM Superstores, said: "Opening our fourth store emphasises how far the business has come in the past 35 years."

Gareth Jones, the bank's regional head of commercial relationships, said: "Yorkshire Bank is proud to support local businesses striving for growth. TFM is a great example of a business increasing productivity through appropriate investment."

AN MP has called on train operators, commuters and local businesses to unite in a bid to end overcrowding on the Chase Line.

Amanda Milling, MP for Cannock Chase, says she has been inundated with complaints from passengers concerned about packed carriages, a shortage of seats and a lack of rolling stock since she was elected in May.

She has now raised the issue with the Secretary of State for Transport and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport.

Various factors have been attributed by Mrs Milling, including a high volume of Amazon workers starting and ending shifts at the same time, a shortage of diesel trains and reported breakdowns. She said: "While I know that the electrification of the Chase Line will help to address the overcrowding issues in the long term, the short term needs to be dealt with, and quickly."

Impact

"It is completely unacceptable that commuters are being crammed in like sardines. In some cases people have told me how they have been late for work because they couldn't get on carriages. London Midland needs to take urgent action."

"I also call on Amazon to work with train operators to look at staggering the impact that their shift patterns have on the line."

She added: "The Labour leadership on Cannock Chase Council need to join me in trying to address the short-term issues faced by commuters because they cannot turn a blind eye to the matter, they have been too silent for too long about this serious problem."

Network Rail has confirmed that the £76 million electrification of the Chase Line will be completed, quashing fears that the project would be put on hold. The rail operator has included the scheme in its recently published five-year funding programme.



Steve and all the staff at Goliath would like to say a huge thank you to all their customers for an extremely busy 2015, and wish them all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Goliath staff are having a well earned extended Christmas holiday period, and we look forward to a new year in 2016!

We close at 4pm Tuesday 22nd December and will re-open as normal at 9am Monday 4th January.



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Vital help for young patients

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CLIC Sargent is appealing for you to help us be ready to support those families who will need us.

Our staff, who are based at the Birmingham Children's Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or within the community, provide the help families need when their lives are turned upside down by cancer.

Last year in the West Midlands your help meant CLIC Sargent was able to support over 550 children and young people.

You can help support children and young people with cancer by making a donation at www.clicsargent.org.uk/donate or text GIVE to 70030 to donate £5. To find out more, please get in touch with me at anna.finnegan@CLICSargent.org.uk or 01509 672395.

ANNA FINNEGAN
Fundraising manager

We must protect our village boundaries

WHY would South Staffordshire Council consider approving a housing development right opposite a high school and primary school which already has a traffic congestion problem?

This is being put forward as the preferred housing site in Saredon Road, Cheslyn Hay. Maybe because it comes with a 'small 30-space overflow school car park' included by the developer?

Take away the donated car park, and would it still be the preferred option for housing? This development

can only add to the traffic congestion. Currently, parking and pedestrians are on the same side as the school. If extra parking is needed it is common sense to provide it on the same side of the road, next to the current coach park.

Otherwise both sides of the road will get blocked by traffic.

The proposed car park on the opposite side of the road will put children and parents at significant risk as they will have to cross an already busy and congested road. We must stand up and

protect our village boundaries. If this farmland is not protected from development, it cannot truly be called green belt.

There is a consultation period ending February 12- email development-plans@sstaffs.gov.uk - and the council also has an exhibition on January 28 at Cheslyn Hay Village Hall. I hope our excellent MP Gavin Williamson will support protecting our greenbelt.

J H HAMMOND
Cheslyn Hay

We shine a light on wellbeing

I WORK for Revitalise, an amazing national charity that provides respite holidays for disabled people and their carers.

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To find out about Revitalise, our breaks or ways that we can help you, please call 0303 303 0147 or visit www.revitalise.org.uk

STEPHANIE STONE
Revitalise

Power station is the sort we should retain

IT is disconcerting to hear that the Government is intent on shutting Rugeley power station ("Power station to close down, November 26").

It would be lovely if we could have energy with no environmental effects but some compromise has always been necessary from the day man first lit a fire.

With immigration pushing the population up so quickly we will need even more energy.

Rugeley, with its high-technology flue gas cleaning, is the sort of modern coal-fired plant we need to retain.

Will Amanda Milling join me in campaigning for the Government to abandon its wishful thinking and adopt realistic energy policies that give us jobs in Rugeley and secure energy at prices which will maintain British jobs?

MARK ELLSE
Cannock

Beauty spot is too important to sell

TRIVIA, that's how the Conservative deputy leader of the county council described the issue of the future of Cannock Chase and green open spaces in Staffordshire.

This speaks volumes of how the Conservatives view the Chase and other green areas.

Members of the county council debated the issue after a petition signed by thousands of Staffordshire residents was submitted calling on the Tory-run council to refuse to sell our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the Chase) and other green open spaces to private investors.

There was a long debate on the matter and, when it came to the vote, the Conservatives got themselves into a complete mess, claiming that they didn't understand what they were voting for! We won the vote, and the county council cannot now sell off the Chase. We do not want a quick fix to make a fast buck. Cannock Chase is too important.

GEORGE ADAMSON
County Councillor for Hednesford & Rawsley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST	EMAIL
Cannock & Rugeley Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES	cannock.chron@expressandstar.co.uk
Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.	

Opposition is no surprise

SO the Polish PM thinks stopping benefits for four years to people coming to Britain is wrong. Do British people going to work in other EU states get benefits straight away? A lot of British taxpayers' money is sent back to Poland; is it any wonder that this Polish minister is against this proposed law. Perhaps if she made Poland a better place for its workers they would not be flocking to Britain to find work.

M FINN
Cannock

Policies need to have a sustainable footing

I READ with interest Paul Witton's letter about everyone being aware of his political opinions, and the point he is making is valid ("Everyone is aware of my political opinions", December 10). Contributors have to remind Councillor Witton of the errors made by past socialist policies and the actual damage it has caused to whom he refers to as ordinary working people.

Labour allowed state benefits to spiral out of control to a point that it was pointless in looking for work. Labour's now moved to the left; the policies have to have an economic and sustainable footing to maintain growth.

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Supporting Pathway at Christmas

SI Cannock & District

CANNOCK Soroptimists have been busy getting ready for Christmas – not for themselves but for many who will be in need this year.

Throughout the year they support the Pathway Project and as Christmas approaches they will continue that support, in particular for the women and children using the refuge for women victims of domestic violence.

The women and children who use the refuge will have left their homes with nothing and for many of them their whereabouts are unknown to family and friends.

So, each Christmas, SI members provide gifts for the women and the children, who always appreciate the fact that someone else thought of them at Christmas.

Gifts were brought along to the Soroptimist meeting before being taken to the refuge and as always, members were incredibly generous, donating gifts of toys, beauty packs, clothing, books, jewellery – all the things which women and children enjoy opening on Christmas morning – along with wrapping paper, gift bags and gift labels.

Some members of SI Cannock recently attended the Pathway AGM and heard at first hand some of the harrowing stories from the women who are domestic violence victims.

Their stories confirmed for Soroptimists the need to support these women and their children in any way they can.

Pat meets pop star Madonna on Holiday



From left, Christine Taylor, Eileen Cryer and new member Annette Bint
Cannock Chase Ladies Probuss Club

AT the November meeting at the Barns Restaurant, vice chairman Eileen Cryer welcomed everyone and introduced new member Annette Bint. She also welcomed Jean Jones back to club after her recent illness.

After lunch the ladies were entertained by speakers' secretary Pat Preece, who reminisced about Cannock town centre in the 60s when it was a market town, full of character. Members joined in with their happy memories.

Pat then told of her encounter with Madonna while on holiday in Suttons Bay, Michigan. They met by coincidence whilst they were both buying tomatoes from a hydroponic market garden at Suttons Bay,

where Madonna was visiting family members. As Pat was quite innocent about the celebrity's identity, she extolled the virtues of the United Kingdom and London in particular – even inviting her to drop in during her next visit to the UK.

A short business meeting was held, after which the Mr Cryer wished everyone a safe journey home. The club meets on the last Thursday of each month. Membership enquiries to be made to secretary Norma Hutchinson on 01543 505183.

Panto stars switch on lights

THE Ridwares WI held a successful tinsel 'n' trimmings evening at the village hall, where the community came together to enjoy mulled wine, tea, coffee and mince pies whilst being entertained by Rugeley Power Station Brass Band, Birchwood Ladies Choir and Abbie and Ellie Holloway.

Ridwares WI

The hand-made crafts stall did a roaring trade and the cake stall sold out.

Cast members from the Lichfield Garrick pantomime of Jack and the Beanstalk joined the evening to turn the lights on the Christmas tree.

Morrisons supermarket, Rugeley, kindly supplied the mince pies and Geoff Gould donated a beautiful Christmas tree to the village.

The Ridwares WI presented a portable defibrillator to the villages, this being the result of the WI's 2015 centenary fundraising campaign.

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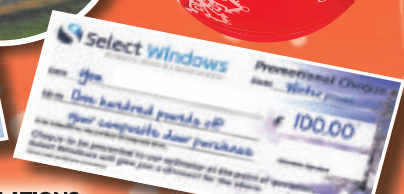
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Befriending service in need of more helpers

A SUPPORT service based in Hednesford is appealing for more volunteers to help in its work with adults who need a helping hand.

Hayward Befriending provides companionship through staff with befriending skills. The service is intended to alleviate the symptoms of loneliness, and encourage and maintain service users' independence in the community, while offering time out for their family and friends or main carer.

"The organisation is able to offer various services, from 'call in' home visits, night sitting, domestic cleaning, basic gardening, shopping assistance to accompanied holidays, tailored to requirements," said Benjamin Osborne, a key worker with Hayward Befriending.

"We also provide weekly discos in various locations for vulnerable adults. The services are suitable for those who need support carrying out their normal lives, and can ease the symptoms of loneliness.

Social

"We are particularly looking for staff and volunteers in Wolverhampton and surrounding areas as our customer base is forever expanding. All of the staff at Hayward Befriending are dedicated to changing someone's life for the better." Hayward Befriending, which is located in Market Street, Hednesford, also runs weekly discos in various locations for vulnerable adults.

As well as its main activities, Hayward also runs The B-hive, a volunteer-led organisation launched in 2012 that aims to bring vulnerable adults together through social events. The B-hive team have recently started a social group in Bilbrook every Wednesday from 11.45am to 4.30pm.

They are now hoping to run discos and Zumba classes in Codsall, following the success of similar events in Cannock, Rugeley, Great Wyrley, and Stafford.

Anyone requiring further details about Hayward Befriending or who is interested in volunteering should call 03335 777830 or visit www.haywardbefriending.org.uk

Young athletes triumph



Chase View pupils, back row, Kieran, Blake, Calum, Oscar, Harvey and Jake, front, Sophie, Hannah, Abbie, Amelia, Brooke and Courtney

YEAR 6 children from Chase View Primary School won the Indoor Athletic Festival held at Rugeley Leisure Centre.

Entered into the Small School Category the pupils excelled in the 'field events' including javelin, discus, triple jump, and long jump, said headteacher Andy Minott.

The youngsters' success followed that of Year 2 pupils at the Rugeley school who won their own athletics category. Meanwhile, Year 5 had a 'smashing' day with their Anglo-Saxon visitor Gregoric.

The children, acting out the role

of Anglo-Saxon servants, were summoned into the hall where they enjoyed learning about the life of Gregoric the farmer/warrior and looking at a range of Anglo-Saxon clothing, everyday objects and weapons.

The 'servants' were then able to try on chainmail and helmets and handle spears, sling shots and shields to make a shield wall.

The day ended with board games and shared stories followed by a Saxon storytelling session. "This has been a great finale to our Anglo-Saxon topic," Mr Minott said.

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Frontline 999 staffing is the UK's best says boss

THE boss of West Midlands Ambulance Service claims the region has the highest ratio of frontline paramedics in the UK.

However, a union insists the country is facing a major staffing crisis.

The comments by the service's chief executive Anthony Marsh come after the GMB union claimed that unfilled vacancies and staff shortages mean existing staff have to shoulder more responsibility and crews responding to 999 calls are staffed inadequately.

Rehana Azam, the GMB's acting national secretary, said: "The vacancy rate across the ambulance service is reaching dangerous levels."

"The service needs proper investment and full recognition of skills if we are to retain staff."

But Mr Marsh said: "As a trust we have the highest ratio of paramedics on the frontline of any UK ambulance service."

Investment

"We are fully committed to achieving our ambition of having a paramedic on every emergency ambulance and response car, which will be the only ambulance service in the country to achieve this objective."

"As a consequence of our ongoing investment in recruitment and training we are fully staffed; we have no paramedic vacancies and continue to actively recruit student and graduate paramedics to our highly successful paramedic training programme."

"In collaboration with commissioners, we are continuing to offer additional training programmes to existing paramedics to enhance their existing medical skills."

"These advanced skills mean that paramedics are able to see and treat more patients in the comfort of their own home, with less people then needing to go to A&E."

"As a trust we also continue to work with all local health providers to ensure that patients we see are treated and then referred to the most suitable health care provider, whether that be their GP service or refer them on to more specialist health services."

Tyler's design to the front



Design winner Tyler Brough with, from left, headteacher Sarah Sindrey, class teacher Abigail Stanford and Cannock Chase MP Amanda Milling

A CANNOCK schoolboy's design is featured on the front of local MP Amanda Milling's official Christmas card.

Tyler Brough, aged four, who goes to Moorhill Primary School, was chosen as the winner of the politician's festive card competition.

"His design now features on the front of my Christmas card," she said.

"I thought his picture was very cute, eye-catching and captured the festive spirit."

The two runners-up were Amber Spink, eight, a pupil at St Peter's C of E Primary School, and Megan Wilkes, also eight, of St Luke's Pri-

mary School. A special mention was also extended to eight-year-old Finley Taylor from Goresmoor Junior School.

"Both of the runners-up and the special mention were exceptionally good. It was just a shame there could be only one winner because so many were worthy of being on the cover of my Christmas card," Ms Milling added.

As well as featuring the winning entry on the front, her card has the two runner-up designs on the back.

Hundreds of children entered the competition, "making it very difficult to choose the winner and runners-up", Ms Milling said.

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Young mothers in double celebration



Helen Sinar a family nurse at the Family Nurse Partnership, with baby Riley Owen



Natasha Parker, with son Ellis, meeting Father Christmas (partnership trust chief executive Stuart Poyner)

FIRST-TIME mothers from Cannock and surrounding areas shared a double celebration with their youngsters to mark Christmas and their graduation from a support and advice scheme.

The Family Nurse Partnership, run by Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership NHS Trust, provides pre and post-natal support to first-time mothers aged between 16 and 19, who access the service before week 29 of pregnancy.

The family nurses help to run weekly and fortnightly sessions until the child reaches the age of two.

More than a dozen young mothers joined family nurses at Cannock Chase Children's Centre to celebrate the suc-

cess of the Family Nurse Partnership programme. Natasha Parker, 19, from Cannock, received support from the service throughout her pregnancy and her child's first two years.

She attended with son Ellis and said: "The family nurses are fantastic, they provide so much support and help."

Natasha's mother Louise said the help given to her daughter had been invaluable.

Another user of the scheme, Sharni Owen, 20, also from Cannock, took son Riley to the celebration. Sharni said: "My family nurse, Helen, is lovely, as are all of the teams. It's reassuring knowing that helps is always on hand."

Hero nominations wanted

FIRST aid charity St John Ambulance is calling for nominations for its annual hero awards.

The charity's Everyday Heroes awards celebrate inspiring stories of first aid heroism from the general public. Previous winners include Carol Trigg of Burntwood, who won the St John Ambulance Volunteer of the Year award in 2014, and Endon High School who were runners-up in the Top of the Class award the same year.

In 2015, Clinigen Group from Burton-on-Trent were shortlisted for the Organisation of the Year for First Aid

Excellence. Everyday Heroes 2015 saw the highest ever number of nominations, and St John Ambulance is asking the public to get in touch and tell them about friends, family members, colleagues, and even strangers who've saved lives or championed first aid.

Emma Elgerton, regional community training co-ordinator for the charity, said: "Everyone has the ability to save a life, and our Everyday Heroes awards give us a chance to celebrate those who are doing just that."

"We're on the lookout for anyone who has gone out of their way to help

people through first aid - from life-savers, to campaigners, teachers, and fundraisers.

"Each year we hear incredibly inspiring stories of ordinary people who have done extraordinary things."

"If you know someone who deserves recognition for their outstanding first aid achievements, nominate them for an Everyday Heroes award."

Entries close at 5pm on March 24, 2016 and nominees will be invited to a star-studded ceremony in London on September 7. Visit www.sja.org.uk/everydayheroes for more details.



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Fire service squad celebrates 25 years



Members of the Ceremonial Squad who attended the ceremony to mark the group's 25th anniversary

PAST and present members of a group representing firefighters in Staffordshire have marked 25 years of the work of the organisation.

Since the Ceremonial Squad was formed in 1990, around 70 serving or retired personnel have been members.

Many attended the ceremony, held at Sandyford Community Fire Station, and members were each presented with a commemorative medal by Chief Fire Officer Peter Dartford, who said:

"Members of the Ceremonial Squad have worked tirelessly for a quarter of a century to represent the service at a range of local, national and international events. They play a vital role in raising our profile and promoting the excellent work that firefighters and other members of the team do."

Alan Smith, secretary to Staffordshire's Ceremonial Squad, has been a member for 25 years and said: "The presentation evening was a very moving event. And it was wonderful that both past and present members of the squad were recognised for the work that they have done."

The Ceremonial Squad represents Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service at remembrance parades, medal presentations, funerals, weddings and other prestigious events.

Annual events attended by the squad include the Firefighters Memorial Parade in London.

Carillion on HS2 shortlist for slice of £900m work

CARILLION is among the list of companies bidding for a share in £900 million work preparing the ground for the first stage of the HS2 project.

HS2 bosses are predicting thousands of people will be needed, handling everything from moving electric, gas and water pipelines, site clearance, demolition, drainage and rerouting roads, to ecological surveys and archaeological work.

The project made its first, short-lived, archaeological find in Buckinghamshire. It turned out to be a Second World War unexploded bomb and was subsequently blown up.

HS2 Ltd has published a shortlist of seven different consortia of companies hoping to win a slice of the work that will be carried out ahead of the civil engineering to start building the actual railway line for the £55.7 billion project.

Preparatory work for the first stretch of the HS2 is expected to start in 2017, after one of the seven bidders is selected.

The construction arm of Wolverhampton-based Carillion has teamed



An artist's impression of HS2

up with French company Eiffage Travaux Publics and Kier Group to form the CEK JV consortium.

Among the other consortium bidders are Balfour Beatty Vinci, Costain, Skanska, Laing O'Rourke, Morgan Sindall, Galliford Try and Bouygues, French owner of Stourport-based Thomas Vale.

Simon Kirby, chief executive of HS2 Ltd, said: "Over the course of the next few years, the winning bidders will go on to employ thousands of people on site and in the supply chain, preparing

the ground for the start of major civil engineering. Announcing the shortlist now will help give business the certainty they need to push on with their bids, start to put in place supply chains and invest in recruitment, training and education ahead of the start of construction."

The work is split into three packages, covering the northern, central and southern sections of the route, so each bidder will have three chances to win a share of the scheme.

Fighting

The announcement follows the Government's decision to bring forward the Birmingham to Crewe section of the route six years ahead of schedule, to 2027.

The choice of Crewe meant Stoke-on-Trent missed out but the city council has vowed to keep fighting to bring a high-speed rail station to the city despite Sir David Higgins recommending Crewe should be the location for the proposed north west hub.

City leaders say Stoke is undergoing an economic renaissance and has enormous future growth potential, and HS2 would supercharge that growth.



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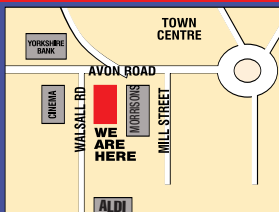
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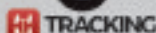


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FOCUS ON HEDNESFORD

Harrison is party guest at opticians

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD eye cancer survivor from Hednesford was special guest at a Stafford optician's anniversary celebrations.

Little Harrison Burden was invited to join Tomorrow Vision Express for its 20th birthday.

Harrison helped the store team to cut the birthday cake. He also helped choose the winner in a competition. The prize was a free pair of glasses for one lucky customer.

Harrison is an ambassador for Vision Express's nominated charity, the Childhood Cancer Trust.

His mother Marie Burden joined store director Nicola Ratford and staff for the celebrations.

Harrison was diagnosed with bilateral retinoblastoma (eye cancer) as a baby.

As part of his treatment, the youngster has had chemotherapy and lost an eye.



Harrison Burden

Hands up in favour of new clock



The clock looks down on the stand

Maintenance volunteer Phil Raybould with the clock

HEDNESFORD Town officials say their ground is now up to the minute after a new clock was installed. Club secretary Terry McMahon said the timepiece was a welcome feature at Keys Park.

"The club's been around for more than 130 years, and this is the first clock we've ever had installed at the ground in all that time," he said.

"It's a welcome addition and adds a little something to the atmosphere when you've got everyone's attention on one clock, rather than having to keep glancing down at their watch."

Centrepiece

The new clock has been positioned inside a stand at Keys Park after The Pitmen's supporters' association raised £700 to fund the project.

Scott Smith, chairman of Hednesford Town Football Club Supporters Association, said: "Around 12 months ago, one of our members brought the matter up of having the centrepiece of a clock installed

at Keys Park so everyone inside the ground could tell what time it was.

"After gaining members' views at supporters association meetings and asking for feedback, we managed to find a company that could supply and design the clock which we required."

Fully illuminated and of the type usually hanging in cricket pavilions, the clock features the club's logo of the crossed keys on its polished face.

The manufacturer Durant Cricket say it is made from fibreglass with a 2mm unbreakable front lens.

Top tips for getting in tip-top shape

JAMES Pearson, general manager at PureGym Hednesford, has some useful advice for anyone aiming to get in shape in 2016:

"January 1st - it's the day we all see as a new start."

"For most of us it's the day we finally start to shed those extra pounds and get back into shape for good this time."

"We have our goal in mind, and we may have joined the gym or gotten a new fitness hobby, but how do we last further than the six weeks that most resolutions do before we spiral back into our unfit ways? Your overall goal might take a year or so result-

ing in slower progress than most like to have. Cut it down to a weekly goal, maybe something as small as attend a class and one independent workout at the gym this week, then a monthly, three-month and six-month goal."

"Beside these goals allow yourself a reward for achieving each stage."

"Not necessarily a food reward, but maybe a day out, a new outfit, get your hair done, buy yourself that watch you've been staring at."

"There is no point in having goals if you can't enjoy what comes from them."

Loan scheme extended

MORE jobs are expected to be created in Staffordshire after a loan scheme designed to help boost new businesses was extended for another three years. The Staffordshire Business Loan Fund, set up by the county council in 2009, has helped financially support new firms since being introduced, leading to more than 1,000 jobs being created or safeguarded. Overall, 165 loans with a value of £4.25 million have been given out. The county council's economy leader Mark Winnington said: "This fund has made a real difference to Staffordshire small businesses."

Votes are needed to find best businesses

LOCAL people are being urged to support their favourite businesses in thebestof Cannock Business of the Year 2016 Awards.

The awards are open to all members of thebestof Cannock. Thebestof is a marketing organisation committed to raising the profile of independent, recommended businesses serving Cannock and the surrounding area.

Word of mouth and customer feedback lie at the heart of thebestof. The role of reviews in the decision-making process has never been more influential and prevalent than it is now.

The Business of the Year Awards are based purely on the number of verified reviews that a business has received from its customers.

The campaign operates at a national and local level providing participants across the country with the opportunity to win the accolade of UK Business of the Year 2016, Business of the Year in Category 2016 or Business of the Year 2016 in their own town.

Showcased

Steve Mallows, owner of thebestof Cannock, said: "We are excited to be launching the Business of the Year 2016 Awards."

"This will be the sixth year that we have showcased the talented businesses that we have in Cannock through an awards campaign."

"This year, business members have to receive a minimum of 12 validated reviews live on our website by the 31st December 2015 in order to qualify."

"We already have a number of recommended local businesses who have secured their place in the competition, with many others requiring just one or two

By Simon Stone

more reviews to be eligible to take part.

"We feel it's important that small businesses should be acknowledged for the contribution they make to the local economy and the role they play in the community."

"If you use a great local business please take a couple of minutes to leave a review by visiting www.thebestof.co.uk/Cannock."

All businesses who have qualified will be entered into the awards, which run from January 4 to midnight on January 31, 2016. Local people can take part by visiting www.thebestof.co.uk/cannock/chooseyourwinner. As an added incentive, those who leave a review during the campaign will be entered into a prize draw to win £50 to spend with a local thebestof business member. The results will be displayed every day on the 'leader board', and the winners will be announced on Monday, February 1.

Mr Mallows added: "It really is down to the great British public to decide who should be recognised in these awards."

"What the businesses have to say about themselves is not relevant - this is about you, the customer, and your experience of the business."

Call to help put end to misery of modern slavery

THE threat of modern slavery was discussed in depth during a conference in Staffordshire.

A half-day event, organised by Staffordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis to discuss the 'abhorrent' crime, was held, with businesses, charities and workers from public sector organisations attending.

Chief Constable Jane Sawyers told the conference modern slavery can take many forms including the trafficking of people, forced labour, servitude and slavery.

Staffordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner

Matthew Ellis spoke at the conference and urged the audience to help raise awareness about modern slavery.

He said: "Victims, no matter what they are the victims of, are at the centre of our thinking and work we are doing."

"Modern slavery is an abhorrent crime which is often hidden in plain sight."

"It's happening across the UK, and it's happening in Staffordshire, although we do not know the scale, big or small, of it here. It's important that we understand that fact as soon as possible, and work is going on to make sure that happens."

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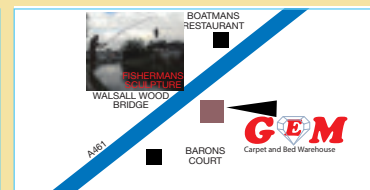
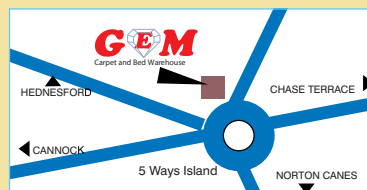
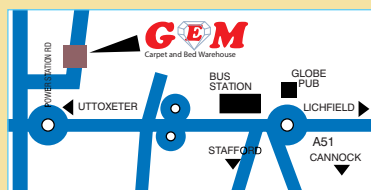
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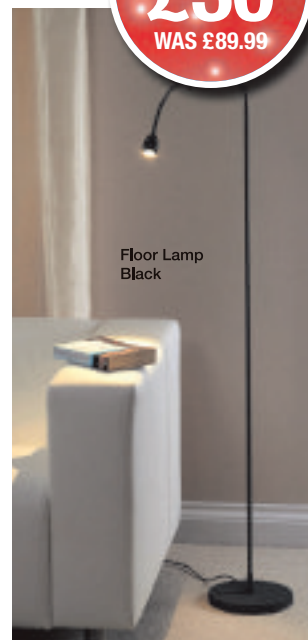


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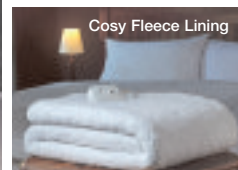
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Police 'inadequate' in care of abuse victims

Dancers win trophy haul



The Dance Dynamics group from Cheslyn Hay with their haul of trophies collected at the Nationwide Freestyle Finals in Blackpool

DANCERS from Cheslyn Hay brought home a haul of trophies from a national competition.

Dance Dynamics took part in the Nationwide Freestyle Finals at the Blackpool Winter Gardens.

Several Dance Dynamics pupils competed against the International Dance Teachers Association's (IDTA) very best. Isabelle Finazzo, aged seven, gained fifth place in latin and ballroom and fourth in

freestyle special needs category. Daniel Wright, seven and Emily Ranford, eight, as a pair, made the Freestyle 9 years and under final placing seventh and in the rock n roll placing fourth.

Daniel was Nationwide Freestyle Champion. Emily gained Nationwide Runner-Up in 6-8 Rosette Rock and Roll, fourth in 6-8 Rosette Latin and Ballroom and Nationwide Champion in Slow Dance.

STAFFORDSHIRE Police demonstrated 'judgmental and unsupportive' attitudes towards some victims of domestic abuse, a damning new report has found.

A government inspection described the force's response to domestic abuse victims as 'a cause of concern'.

It said some victims were not being adequately protected by officers and gave the force the lowest possible rating of 'inadequate' for protecting vulnerable victims.

Chief Constable Jane Sawyers said the force would be 'addressing all the issues raised'. Meanwhile, the county's Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis said: "Staffordshire Police must accept there are failings in the way they deal with and support some vulnerable people, specifically in relation to domestic abuse."

Commenting on the report, Councillor George Adamson, leader of Cannock Chase District Council, said: "There are clearly huge, systemic issues within Staffordshire Police and the buck must stop with the Police and Crime Commissioner."

Investigations

"Of course the Chief Constable has a role in this, but it is Mr Ellis, as Police and Crime Commissioner, who is ultimately accountable for these failings."

The report found cases where victims were judged to have invented allegations before investigations had even started, while officers discouraged some victims from reporting domestic abuse crimes.

Some officers were said to have demonstrated 'judgmental and unsupportive' attitudes towards vulnerable victims. The report also noted poorly planned investigations had been conducted by non-specialist staff with no supervision.

There were also instances of victims not being kept informed of the progress of their case. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) also found that action taken by staff responding to missing children was 'inconsistent, with little evidence of supervision in the early stages'.

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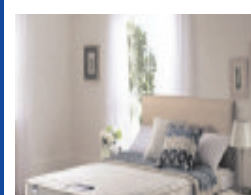
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Christmas Eve

BBC 1



Lee Mack features in the Christmas special of Not Going Out, on at 10.45pm

6.00 Breakfast Headlines and business news. **9.00 David Suchet: In the Footsteps of St Paul** Part two of two. How Paul brought Christianity to the Mediterranean world. (R) **10.00 On Angel Wings (R) 10.30 FILM: The Santa Clause (1994)** Fantasy comedy, starring Tim Allen. **11.00 Bargain Hunt** Four teams test their antiques knowledge in Corby, Northamptonshire. (R) **1.00 BBC News at One; Weather 1.10 Midlands Today; Weather 1.20 Snow Chick: A Penguin's Tale** Following the first months in the life of an emperor penguin. (R) **2.20 FILM: A Christmas Carol (2009)** Animated fantasy based on Charles Dickens' novel, featuring Jim Carrey and Gary Oldman. **2.30**

BBC 2



Natalie Dormer stars in The Scandalous Lady W, on at 10.00pm

6.20 Homes Under the Hammer A cottage in Cornwall and a house in south London. (R) **7.20 James Martin - Home Comforts at Christmas (R) 8.05 Sign Zone: This Wild Life (R) 8.35 Sign Zone: Great British Menu (R) 9.05 FILM: Bedknobs and Broomsticks (1971)** Disney musical fantasy, starring Angela Lansbury. **11.00 The Hairy Bikers' Northern Exposure (R) 12.00 Natural World** Gentoo penguins raising chicks in Port Lockroy in the Antarctic. (R) **1.00 FILM: Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit (1993)** Comedy sequel, starring Whoopi Goldberg. **2.45 Perry and Croft: Made in Britain** How the duo's comedies each encapsulated the end of an era. (R)

ITV



Keith Lemon presents Through the Christmas Keyhole, on at 9.45pm

6.00 CITV: Dino Dan. (R) 6.15 Dino Dan (R) 6.25 Sooty (R) 6.40 Super 4 Fourchies tries to make a love potion for the Dark Baron. (R) **7.00 Good Morning Britain** News, current affairs and lifestyle features. **8.30 Lorraine** Entertainment and fashion news. **9.25 Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas** Stop-motion animated adventure based on the film Elf. (R) **10.25 Pick Me! Game** show featuring lively, loud and energetic players. (R) **11.25 FILM: Back to the Future Part II (1989)** Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Michael J Fox. **1.30 1.30 ITV Lunchtime News; Weather. 1.45 FILM: Small Soldiers (1998)** Children's adventure, with Kirsten Dunst, Denis Leary and Gregory Smith. **2.30**

Ch4



Christmas displays, My Crazy Christmas Lights, on at 8.00pm

6.15 Small Animal Hospital John Barrowman visits a centre for rescued rabbits. **7.00 The Big Bang Theory (R) 7.20 The Big Bang Theory (R) 7.40 The Snowman (R) 8.05 Father Christmas (R) 8.35 The Simpsons (R) 9.10 FILM: Animals United (2010)** Animated comedy with the voices of James Corden and Stephen Fry. **10.55 FILM: Horton Hears a Who! (2008)** Animated comedy, featuring the voice of Jim Carrey. **12.30 FILM: Stuart Little (1999)** Comedy adventure, with the voice of Michael J Fox. **2.10 Channel 4 News** Including sport and weather. **2.15 FILM: It's a Wonderful Life (1946)** Fantasy drama, starring James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore. (b/w) **2.45**

Ch5



Festive cheer in Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud, on at 7.00pm

6.00 Milkshake! 9.30 The Real Face of Santa Claus Documentary piecing together historical clues about St Nicholas, an early Christian bishop who lived in Turkey, while forensic experts build a reconstruction of his likeness. **10.30 FILM: Gone with the Wind (1939)** A plantation heiress has a tumultuous relationship with a roughish Southern gentleman during the American Civil War. Epic romantic drama, starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable. **2.45 FILM: The Dam Busters (1954)** An engineer designs an ingenious bouncing bomb to destroy major dams in Germany's industrial heartland. Fact-based Second World War drama, with Michael Redgrave. (b/w) **2.55**

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

3.50 Finding Nemo (2003) 4.55 Harry Hill in Professor Branestawm Returns **6.20 BBC News** **6.30 Midlands Today; Weather** **6.40 Celebrity Mastermind** **7.10 Pointless Celebrities Christmas Special** Featuring Jeffrey Holland and Su Pollard, Alison Hammond and Robin Windsor, and Colin Baker and Louise Jameson. **8.00 Would I Lie to You? At Christmas** Rob Brydon presents a festive special of the comedy game, with Bill Bailey, Ruth Jones, Jo Brand and Kelly Holmes joining team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack. **8.30 EastEnders** Stacey goes into labour during the nativity play, Ronnie is forced to choose a side between Vincent and Phil, and Sharon drops a bombshell that threatens to tear the Beales apart. **9.05 Peter Kay: 20 Years of Funny** A celebration of the Bolton comedian's two decades in the business, going back to his early days before stardom and hearing from friends and colleagues about what makes him tick. **10.05 Walliams and Friend** Sketch show, starring David Walliams and Joanna Lumley. **10.45 Not Going Out** On Christmas Eve, Lee and Lucy - who is three days overdue with their first baby - find themselves mistakenly caught up in a robbery at a local department store. **11.30 BBC News; Weather.** **11.45 Midnight Mass from St George's Cathedral, Southwark** Live service from south London, led by the Archbishop of Southwark, the Most Rev Peter Smith, with prayers to reflect the cathedral's international congregation. **1.00 FILM: Serendipity (2001) 2.25 Weather for the Week Ahead 2.30 BBC News**

3.15 The Snow Wolf Family and Me (R) 4.15 The Snow Wolf Family and Me (R) 5.15 Carols from King's 6.30 To the Manor Born (R) 7.00 Dad's Army Mainwaring finds himself bidding against Pike for an orange at a fundraising bazaar, but the private reveals a stubborn streak that costs the captain dear. (R) **7.30 Christmas University Challenge** Graduates from Exeter University and Magdalen College, Oxford, compete, with wildlife presenter Nick Baker and documentary-maker Louis Theroux among the contestants. **8.00 MasterChef: The Professionals** The three finalists have three hours to cook a starter, a main course and a dessert, before one of them is crowned Professional MasterChef Champion 2015. Last in the series. **9.00 The Great History Quiz: The Tudors** Kirsty Young asks the questions in this quiz which sees two teams of historians, captained by Lucy Worsley and Dan Snow, demonstrate their knowledge on all aspects of Tudor life. **10.00 The Scandalous Lady W** Fact-based period drama about an 18th-century noblewoman who found herself at the centre of a public scandal after eloping with her husband's best friend. Natalie Dormer stars. (R) **11.30 Dial M for Murder (1954)** A tennis player's plan to arrange the death of his socialite wife goes wrong when she kills her would-be assassin. Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, with Ray Milland and Grace Kelly. **1.10 Simply Nigella: Christmas Special (R) 2.10 Christmas Shopping Fever 2015: John Lewis and the Retail Race (R) 3.10 James Martin - Home Comforts at Christmas (R)**

3.50 National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (1989) Comedy, starring Chevy Chase. **5.40 All Star Mr & Mrs With** Martin McCutcheon, Harry Redknapp and Gwyneth Strong. (R) **6.45 ITV Evening News; Weather.** **7.00 Emmerdale** Belle sees Zak and Joanie kissing and becomes determined to make her pay, while the warehouse robbery is on the news and Aaron's picture is in the paper. **8.00 Coronation Street** Fiz tells Tyrone that Hope might not be allowed home for Christmas and Lapland might have to wait. Meanwhile, Tracy confides in Todd that she thinks Robert is planning to propose. **8.30 The Abba Christmas Party** Paddy McGuinness presents as music and TV stars sing Abba hits, featuring performances by Susan Boyle, Alexandra Burke, Shayne Ward and Catherine Tyldesley and Scouting for Girls. **9.45 Through the Christmas Keyhole** Keith Lemon has a festive rummage through the homes of three celebrities, challenging Stephen Mulhern, Claudia Winkleman and Jimmy Carr to guess their identities. Last in the series. **10.45 ITV News** Including Regional News and ITV Weather. **11.00 Christmas Carols on ITV** Aled Jones joins the congregation of St Elisabeth's Church in Reddish, Stockport, for their Christmas Eve carol service, with performances by Collabro and soul singer Toni Green. **12.00 FILM: Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989)** Time-travel comedy, starring Keanu Reeves and Alex Winter. **1.40 Murder, She Wrote (R) 2.30 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA (R) 3.15 ITV Nightscreen** Text-based information service. **5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show (R)**

4.55 The Snowman Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R) **5.25 The Snowman and the Snowdog** Animated sequel to classic festive tale The Snowman. (R) **6.00 Hollyoaks** When Lockie hears about the explosion, he is suspicious of Cameron and threatens to go to the police. Elsewhere, the police search for Reenie and Lisa reveals her secret. **7.00 Jamie's Night Before Christmas** Jamie Oliver presents last-minute tips to help people improve their festive dishes, having surveyed thousands of Brits to find out what they fear most about cooking at Christmas. **8.00 My Crazy Christmas Lights** The phenomenon of competitive Christmas displays, where a passion for festive lights has seen neighbours trying to outdo each other for the most elaborate design. **9.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Christmas Special** Jimmy Carr hosts another festive edition of the show, with some of the nation's top comedy stars joining team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson. **10.00 Rude Tube Christmas Cracker** Alex Zane presents 50 festive internet clips that have proved popular around the world, including a turkey with a boob job and an inventive Christmas tree decoration-remover. **11.00 Gogglebox** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R) **12.00 The Inbetweeners (R) 12.35 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.05 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.30 The Inbetweeners (R) 2.00 Man Down** Christmas Special (R) **2.30 Man Down (R) 2.55 Man Down (R) 3.25 Embarrassing Bodies (R) 4.20 Benchmark 5.10 Kirstie's Handmade Treasures (R) 5.30 Famous Fred (R)**

5.15 5 News **5.20 Scrooge - A Christmas Carol (1951)** (b/w) Starring Alastair Sim. **7.00 Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud** Iain Lee presents Christmas-themed videos that have taken the internet by storm in a seasonal special showcasing hilarious online clips with a festive twist; 5 News Update **7.55 Frank Sinatra & Gene Kelly: Ol' Blues Eyes Is Back** A TV special from 1973 in which Frank Sinatra performs a selection of classic songs and is joined for a couple of numbers by Anchors Aweigh co-star Gene Kelly. **8.25 Happy Holidays with Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby** The veteran crooners' festive special from 1957, with songs including 'Away in a Manger', 'The Christmas Song', 'Santa Claus Is Coming to Town' and 'White Christmas'; 5 News Update **8.55 The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show** Festive special from 1981, in which the duo perform vintage sketches and act as a backing group for Alvin Stardust. Featuring guest appearances by Ralph Richardson and Robert Hardy. (R) **10.00 Christmas with the Double Acts** An hour of side-splitting fun with some of the greatest double acts to have graced the small screen, proving that when it comes to comedy, two are often better than one. **11.00 Morecambe & Wise Live! 1973** The duo's performance at the Ashcroft Theatre in Croydon's Fairfield Halls in October 1973, which was the only one of their stage shows captured on film. (R) **12.30 FILM: Scrooge - A Christmas Carol (1951)** (b/w) **2.15 SuperCasino 4.00 Michaela's Wild Challenge (R) 4.25 Divine Designs (R) 4.45 House Doctor (R) 5.10 House Doctor (R) 5.35 House Doctor (R)**

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Wishing you Christmas Cheer

Christmas Day

BBC 1



Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special 2015, on at 6.15pm

6.00 **Breakfast** Headlines and business news. 9.00 **Shrek the Halls** (R) 9.20 **Clangers** 9.35 **Danger Mouse: The Snowman Cometh** 10.00 **Christmas Day Service Live from Bath Abbey** A service led by the Rev Edward Mason and the Rev Claire Robson. 11.00 **FILM: The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause** (2006) Christmas fantasy comedy sequel, starring Tim Allen. ★★★ 12.25 **FILM: Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted** (2012) Animated comedy, with the voices of Ben Stiller and Chris Rock. ★★★ 1.50 **BBC News; Weather.** 2.00 **Top of the Pops Christmas** Featuring performances by Little Mix, Coldplay, Jess Glynne and Ellie Goulding.

BBC 2



Taking a personal journey, Darcey's Ballet Heroes, on at 8.50pm

6.00 **FILM: The Road to El Dorado** (2000) Animated adventure, with the voices of Kenneth Branagh and Kevin Kline. ★★★ 7.20 **Galapagos - Islands of Change: Natural World** (R) 8.20 **FILM: Herbie Rides Again** (1974) Disney comedy sequel, starring Helen Hayes. ★★★ 9.45 **FILM: The Cat in the Hat** (2003) Comedy fantasy, starring Mike Myers. ★★★ 11.00 **Carols from King's** (R) 12.15 **Climbed Every Mountain - The Story Behind The Sound of Music** The true story behind the real Von Trap family, with Sue Perkins. (R) 1.15 **The Good Life** Tom ponders the future. (R) 1.45 **FILM: Frankenweenie** (2012) Premiere. Animated fantasy, with the voice of Charlie Tahan. (b/w) ★★★

ITV



Peter Wilkinson features, Cameraman to the Queen, on at 3.10pm

6.00 **CITV: Dino Dan.** (R) 6.10 **Dino Dan** (R) 6.25 **Sooty** (R) 6.40 **Sooty** (R) 6.50 **Oddbods** (R) 7.00 **Dino Dan** (R) 7.15 **Horrid Henry** (R) 7.30 **Horrid Henry** (R) 7.45 **Christmas: Chowder** Chowder worries he will not get the gift that he wants. (R) 8.10 **Almost Naked Animals** (R) 8.25 **Weekend at Christmas** With Laura Fraser, James Morrison and Leona Lewis. 9.25 **FILM: Santa Claus: The Movie** (1985) Family fantasy adventure, starring Dudley Moore. ★★ 11.30 **FILM: Happy Feet** (2006) Animated adventure, with the voices of Elijah Wood and Robin Williams. ★★★ 1.35 **Text Santa: One More Time** Choice moments from the recent TV charity appeal. 2.45 **ITV Lunchtime News-Weather.**

Ch4



Children share their views, Gogglesprogs, on at 8.00pm

6.45 **Prep & Landing** (R) 7.05 **Prep & Landing: Naughty v Nice** (R) 7.30 **The Bear** (R) 8.00 **FILM: A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures** (2010) ★★★ 9.40 **The Simpsons** (R) 10.10 **The Simpsons** (R) 10.40 **The Simpsons** (R) 11.15 **Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas** (R) 11.40 **Toy Story Toons** 12.10 **Father Christmas** Seasonal animation based on Raymond Briggs' book. (R) 12.40 **The Snowman** Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R) 1.15 **The Snowman and the Snowdog** Animated sequel to classic festive tale *The Snowman*. (R) 1.45 **FILM: The Muppet Christmas Carol** (1992) Comedy, with Michael Caine and Steven Mackintosh alongside the puppet characters. ★★★

Ch5



Sinatra 100: An All-Star Grammy Concert, on at 11.05pm

6.00 **Milkshake!** 9.50 **Andre Rieu's Christmas Spectacular** A seasonal concert by the Dutch violinist and his Johann Strauss Orchestra, featuring performances of *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *Silent Night*, *Jingle Bells* and *White Christmas*. (R) 10.50 **FILM: Scrooge** (1970) A miserly man is taught the error of his ways by a host of spectral visitors. Musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, starring Albert Finney and Alec Guinness. ★★★ 1.05 **FILM: Seven Brides for Seven Brothers** (1954) A cowboy decides to get married, prompting his six hellraising brothers to kidnap brides for themselves. Stanley Donen's musical Western, starring Howard Keel and Jane Powell. ★★★

Early View

3.00 **The Queen's Christmas Broadcast 2015**

3.10 **Brave** (2012) Premiere. Animated fantasy, with the voice of Kelly Macdonald. ★★★

4.35 **BBC News; Weather.**

4.45 **Stick Man**

5.15 **Doctor Who**

6.15 **Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special 2015** Six previous contestants compete for the Silver Star trophy.

7.30 **Call the Midwife** As Poplar readies itself for Christmas 1960, a visit from a BBC film crew promises to make it a festive holiday to remember. However, it's a difficult time for grieving mother Iris.

8.45 **EastEnders** Ian's hopes of a perfect Christmas fall apart when the Beales and Mitchells end up arguing. Stacey receives an unexpected visitor and Dean surprises Roxi with an engagement ring.

9.45 **Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special** The dotting mother's wish to have a safe and peaceful Christmas at home is frustrated at every turn. The first of two festive instalments, written by and starring Brendan O'Carroll.

10.25 **Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show** From the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, London, the host welcomes performers including Dara O Briain, Dame Edna Everage, Paul Zerdin, Ellie Goulding and Tom Jones to the stage.

11.25 **BBC News; Weather.**

11.40 **Love Come Down at Christmas** At St Alban's Church in Bristol, the Exultate Singers perform David Ogden's new choral setting of the Christina Rossetti poem, and actor Alex Jennings reads from the Gospel of John; National Lottery Update

11.45 **Comedy Bloopers**

12.15 **Not Going Out** (R) 1.00 **FILM: Surviving Christmas** (2004) ★ 2.25 **Weather for the Week Ahead** 2.30 **BBC News**

3.05 **Tim Rice - A Life in Song** (R)

4.35 **Romeo & Juliet** (2013) With Douglas Booth. ★★

6.20 **Sign Zone: The Queen's Christmas Broadcast 2015** (R)

6.30 **World's Sneakiest Animals**

7.30 **Dad's Army** Pompous Captain Mainwaring proves he is a softie at heart by organising a Christmas treat for the struggling senior citizens of Walmington-on-Sea. (R)

8.00 **The Two Ronnies: Christmas Show** Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett in a special Christmas show of sketches, jokes and songs, with guests Peter Wyngarde and Patrick Troughton. Plus, music by Elaine Page. (R)

8.50 **Darcey's Ballet Heroes** Former ballet dancer-turned-Strictly Come Dancing judge Darcey Bussell undertakes a very personal journey to meet the heroes and dancers who transformed male ballet.

9.50 **Q!** Stephen Fry conjures up some seasonal merriment with Jenny Eclair, Johnny Vegas and Bill Bailey supplementing the efforts of regular panellist Alan Davies.

10.20 **We're Doomed! The Dad's Army Story** Comedy drama about how Jimmy Perry and David Croft overcame BBC management scepticism and focus groups to get the sitcom *Dad's Army* on air. Starring Paul Ritter and Richard Dormer. (R)

11.20 **Gambit** (2012) A put-upon art expert plans revenge on a millionaire by tricking him into buying a fake Monet painting. Comedy remake, starring Colin Firth, Cameron Diaz and Alan Rickman. ★★

12.40 **FILM: The Trouble with Harry** (1955) Hitchcock's black comedy, with Edmund Gwenn, John Forsyth and Shirley MacLaine. ★★★ 2.20 **This Is BBC Two**

3.00 **The Queen Her Majesty's annual address.**

3.10 **Cameraman to the Queen** Royal cameraman Peter Wilkinson follows the queen over the course of one year.

4.10 **Countrywise Winter Wonderland** Exploring what makes this time of year special for Britain's countryside.

5.00 **Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas** The broadcaster spreads festive cheer at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home in London.

6.00 **ITV Evening News; Weather.**

6.15 **You've Been Framed! With Bells On** Camcorder clips with a festive theme, including a pensioner throwing fireworks at carol singers, a Christmas fairy going up in flames, and a smartphone found inside a turkey.

6.45 **Emmerdale** Pollard finally leaves the house, and has an experience that forces him to confront his past, present and future. Coronation Street's Liz Dawn (Vera Duckworth) guest stars.

7.45 **Coronation Street** Robert is about to propose to Tracy, but first he asks her a question that leaves her reeling. Meanwhile, Sinead is thrilled when she gets an engagement ring of her own.

8.45 **Downton Abbey - The Finale** Mary endeavours to build bridges, but Edith's secret continues to pose a threat as Julian Fellowes bids farewell to the Crawleys with one last festive special.

10.45 **Our Cilla** A celebration of Cilla Black by the people who knew her best, including famous faces such as Ringo Starr, Cliff Richard, Christopher Biggins and Paul O'Grady.

11.45 **ITV News; Weather.**

12.10 **FILM: Dr No** (1962) ★★★ 1.50 **Murder, She Wrote** (R) 2.45 **The Jeremy Kyle Show USA** (R) 3.25 **ITV Nightscreen**

3.25 **Channel 4 News** Including sport and weather.

3.35 **Alternative Christmas Message** Channel 4's alternative to the Queen's Christmas Day broadcast.

3.45 **Scrooged** (1988) Christmas comedy, starring Bill Murray. ★★

5.45 **Home Alone 2: Lost in New York** (1992) Comedy sequel, starring Macaulay Culkin. ★★★

8.00 **Gogglesprogs** The nation's children share their opinions on the best and worst of 2015's TV, from the cakes on *The Great British Bake Off*, to big news stories like the general election.

9.00 **Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special** The host is joined by Catherine Tate's Nan, Keith Lemon, Lorraine Kelly, Emma Willis and Marvin Humes. Plus, music by Little Mix and One Direction. Last in the series.

11.00 **8 Out of 10 Cats Christmas Special** A number of familiar faces join host Jimmy Carr and team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson as they cast their eyes over some of the more memorable stories of 2015.

12.05 **Very British Problems at Christmas** A one-off return for the show. This time famous faces, including David Tennant, James Corden, Roshni Ranganathan, Catherine Tate and Danny Dyer, grumble about the festive season. (R) 1.05 **FILM: Ferris Bueller's Day Off** (1986) A cocky teenager plays truant from school and spends the day dragging his friends into all manner of adventures in the big city. Comedy, starring Matthew Broderick and Mia Sara. ★★★

2.50 **Friday Night Dinner** Adam finally brings a girl home for dinner. (R) 3.15 **Gadget Man** Richard Ayoade takes on the worst of the British weather. (R) 3.40 **Gadget Man** Richard Ayoade turns his attention to public transport. (R) 4.10 **Benchmark** Game show, hosted by Paddy McGuinness. 4.55 **Grand Designs Australia** (R) 5.50 **How I Met Your Mother** (R)

3.10 **The Wizard of Oz** (1939) Musical fantasy, starring Judy Garland. ★★★

5.10 **Michael Buble's Christmas 2015** Festive special, with guest appearances by Celine Dion, Tori Kelly and Sharon Jones. (R)

6.05 **Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs** A countdown of songs guaranteed to make any Christmas party go with a swing, including classics by the Jackson 5, Jona Lewie, Band Aid, the Pogues and Kirsty MacColl, and Slade. (R)

8.50 **Chas & Dave's Xmas Knees Up!** Festive entertainment from 1982, with guests including Eric Clapton, Jimmy Cricket, Jim Davidson, Albert Lee and Lennie Peters joining the Cockney duo. (R)

9.40 **Britain's Favourite Abba Songs** A countdown of the Swedish pop group's 20 most popular songs, with celebrity fans including Jane McDonald and Liz McAlarnon introducing their favourite clips. (R)

11.05 **Sinatra 100: An All-Star Grammy Concert** Celebration of the 100th anniversary of the singer's birth, featuring performances of some of his best-known songs by Tony Bennett, Garth Brooks, Usher and Alicia Keys.

1.25 **Abba: Live in Concert** The Swedish band in concert during their six-night residence at London's Wembley Arena in November 1979, featuring hits including *Voulez-Vous*, *Dancing Queen* and *Waterloo*. (R) 2.35 **SuperCasino** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 4.00 **Christmas with Britain's Biggest Family** The problems posed by the festive season to large families. (R) 4.45 **House Doctor** A flat in Kensal Green, west London. (R) 5.10 **House Doctor** A property in Spennymoor, Co Durham. (R) 5.35 **House Doctor** (R)

Prime Time

Late View

Boxing Day

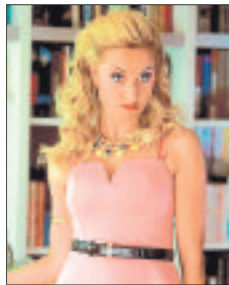
BBC 1



David Jason stars, Still Open All Hours, on at 8.00pm

6.00 Breakfast A round-up of national and international news, plus sports reports, weather forecasts and arts and entertainment features. Including NewsWatch at 7.45. **10.00 Christmas Saturday Kitchen** With Christopher Biggins, Eric Chavot, Pascal Aussignac and Nadiya Hussain. **11.30 James Martin - Home Comforts at Christmas** Transforming leftovers into simple dishes. (R) **12.15 BBC News**; Weather. **12.25 Football Focus** Dan Walker reviews the week's action. **1.00 Comic Relief 2015: Thanks a Billion!** Lenny Henry revisits comedy highlights from this year's charity event. **2.00 Wallace & Gromit: A Grand Day Out (R)** **2.25 A Grand Night In: The Story of Aardman**

BBC 2



Russell Howard stars, A Gert Lush Christmas, on at 9.00pm

6.00 Race to Super Bowl 50 Action from the week 15 fixtures. (R) **6.50 Flog It!** Making a profit at auction. **7.35 FILM: Tom Thumb (1958)** A miniature boy foils the schemes of a pair of crooks and helps a kind musician find true love. Children's musical fantasy, starring Russ Tamblin, Terry-Thomas and Peter Sellers. **9.05 FILM: Hotel for Dogs (2009)** Family comedy, starring Emma Roberts. **10.35 Ten Pieces II** The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and guests perform recitals of 10 classical works. **11.35 FILM: G-Force (2009)** Children's adventure, starring Bill Nighy. **1.00 Attenborough's Big Birds: Natural World (R)** **2.00 Attenborough's Paradise Birds (R)**

ITV



Holly Willoughby presents, Surprise Surprise on at 7.00pm

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. (R) **6.25 Pat & Stan (R)** **6.30 Pat & Stan (R)** **6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures (R)** **6.50 Dino Dan (R)** **7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story (R)** **7.05 Oddbods (R)** **7.10 Sooty (R)** **7.25 Super 4 (R)** **7.40 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R)** **7.50 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R)** **8.00 The Aquabats! Super Show! (R)** **8.30 Thunderbirds Are Go 9.00 The Tom & Jerry Show (R)** **9.15 The Tom & Jerry Show (R)** **9.25 Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas (R)** **10.25 You've Been Framed! (R)** **10.55 FILM: Back to the Future Part III (1990) *** 1.05 ITV News and Weather 1.20 FILM: Jurassic Park (1993)** Action adventure, starring Sam Neill. *******

Ch4



George Clooney stars, Fantastic Mr Fox, on at 11.25am

6.15 FILM: Ramona and Beezus (2010) Family comedy, starring Joey King. **8.00 The Morning Line** Nick Luck and guests are at Kempton Park to preview today's races. **9.00 The Big Bang Theory** Leonard fails to get Sheldon into the Christmas mood. (R) **9.30 The Big Bang Theory** The gang reflects on how Sheldon has changed their lives. (R) **10.00 The Big Bang Theory (R)** **10.25 The Simpsons (R)** **10.55 The Simpsons (R)** **11.25 FILM: Fantastic Mr Fox (2009)** A fox gives up stealing chickens in favour of family life, but a new challenge is too tempting. Stop-motion animated adventure, with the voices of George Clooney and Meryl Streep. ***** 1.10 Channel 4 Racing**

Ch5



Festive cheer, Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud, on at 7.05pm

6.00 Milkshake! 9.10 The Saturday Show Matt Barbet and Gaby Roslin present the topical show with three celebrity guests, who discuss the week's headlines, as well as viral videos and the latest TV and film releases. **11.10 The Dog Rescuers at Christmas with Alan Davies** Qi regular and comedian Alan Davies throws a party for some of the stars of the series, and award-winning RSPCA officer, Derek Hampson hands out presents to rescue dogs across England and Wales. (R) **12.10 The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe** Biopic exploring how the actress and sex symbol managed to hide her most intimate secrets from the press, even at the height of her fame. Starring Kelli Garner and Susan Sarandon.

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

3.25 Puss in Boots (2011) ***
4.45 The Croods (2013) ***

6.10 Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas
6.40 BBC News
6.50 Midlands Today; Weather

7.00 Dickensian New series. Period drama re-imagining the works of Charles Dickens as inter-connected tales, beginning as ruthless debt collector Jacob Marley makes himself an enemy.

7.30 EastEnders Kat tells Martin that Alfie is still in Spain - unaware he is not far behind her - and Dean is angry with Shirley after she ruins his plans for Christmas dinner.

8.00 Still Open All Hours Granville and Gastric try to get Madge into the festive spirit by organising a cosy drinks party, while a bargain Christmas tree causes problems.

8.30 Dickensian Christmas Day arrives and Inspector Bucket begins his investigation into Jacob Marley's murder, and at Satis House, Amelia Havisham's mysterious rescuer makes another appearance.

9.00 And Then There Were None New series. Ten strangers are stranded on a remote island, and learn there may be a killer in their midst. Period mystery, starring Anna Maxwell Martin. Continues tomorrow.

10.00 BBC News; Weather.
10.20 The National Lottery Live Ore Oduba with the all-important Lotto and Thunderball draws.

10.30 Match of the Day Gary Lineker presents highlights of the full programme of Premier League games, including Chelsea v Watford, Manchester City v Sunderland and Stoke City v Manchester United; National Lottery Update

12.05 FILM: The Guardian (2006) * 2.15 Weather for the Week Ahead 2.20 BBC News**

3.00 Bedtime Stories (2008) Fantasy comedy, starring Adam Sandler. *******

4.30 Final Score A round-up of this afternoon's football results.

5.30 Don't Panic! The Dad's Army Story (R)

6.20 We're Doomed!: The Dad's Army Story (R)
7.20 Dad's Army Frazer is unable to hide his delight when Captain Mainwaring's disreputable brother crashlands a sherry party for local dignitaries. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe. (R)

8.00 Top Gear: From A to Z John Bishop narrates the first of two programmes celebrating the highlights of the Jeremy Clarkson, James May and Richard Hammond era, via an alphabetical list.

9.00 A Gert Lush Christmas Comedian Russell Howard's debut comedy drama. Dan Colman is about to introduce the woman of his dreams to his crazy but adorable family at Christmas, but it may not go to plan.

10.00 Abz on the Christmas Farm Abz Love and his girlfriend Vicky Fallon spend Christmas reflecting on the successes and failures of their year running a smallholder farm in Wales.

10.30 Backchat End of Year Show 2015 Jack Whitehall and his father Michael review the past 12 months, picking apart some of the highs and lows of 2015 in an end-of-year special.

11.15 Kinky Boots (2005) A man inherits a struggling shoe factory and finds salvation for his business in a drag artist's need for custom footwear. Comedy drama, starring Chiwetel Ejiofor and Joel Edgerton. *******
1.00 FILM: Marnie (1964) ***
3.05 Sign Zone: Imagine - The Ecstasy of Wilko Johnson (R) 4.40 This Is BBC Two

3.40 Midsomer Murders A man's apparent suicide shocks the village of Morton Fendle - but things take a sinister turn when Barnaby and Jones discover the victim was not alone when he died. (R)

5.40 ITV News and Weather
6.00 The Nation's Favourite Disney Song

7.00 Surprise Surprise Holly Willoughby delivers Christmas presents to members of the public, including an injured soldier preparing to row across the Atlantic and a young heart transplant survivor.

8.00 Peter & Wendy Lucy Rose, a 12-year-old girl with a serious heart condition, is admitted to St Ormond Street Hospital to await treatment. On the night before her operation, Lucy reads JM Barrie's tale of Peter Pan to her fellow patients, and as she eventually drifts off to sleep, her dreaming mind conjures up the magical world of Neverland.

10.05 The Jonathan Ross Show Christmas Special The host presents a Boxing Day special in which he dispenses with his no-holds-barred questions, and instead invites guests to take part in light-hearted games.

11.10 ITV News Including Regional News and ITV Weather; Weather.
11.25 From Russia with Love (1963) James Bond is assigned to steal a top-secret Soviet decoding machine - but the mission is a trap set by crime syndicate Spectre. Spy thriller, with Sean Connery and Robert Shaw. *******

1.25 Jackpot247 Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.00 Murder, She Wrote** Cabot Cove becomes the scene of deadly competition when an eccentric recluse dies, and Jessica is given the dubious honour of executing the woman's will. (R)

3.30 Home Alone 3 (1997) Comedy sequel, starring Alex D Linz. *******

5.25 Channel 4 News Including sport and weather.

5.35 The Secret Life of Children at Christmas The children are reunited to perform their own nativity play. (R)

6.30 Britain's Favourite Children's Books with David Walliams The comedy actor counts down through a list of the nation's most beloved children's books, while other celebrity fans read extracts from the selected tales.

8.00 Inside Lego at Christmas Cameras return to the Lego factory ahead of Christmas to discover how staff prepare for the festive season, which accounts for more than half of the firm's annual sales.

9.00 The Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2015 Rob Brydon, Sue Perkins, David Mitchell, Claudia Winkleman, Greg Davies and Jo Brand reveal whether they have their fingers on the pulse of modern life in the annual quiz.

11.05 Rude Tube Christmas Cracker Alex Zane presents 50 festive internet clips that have proved popular around the world, including a turkey with a boob job and an inventive Christmas tree decoration-remover. (R)

12.10 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special The host is joined by Catherine Tate's Nan, Keith Lemon, Lorraine Kelly, Emma Willis and Marvin Humes. Plus, music by Little Mix and One Direction. Last in the series. (R) **2.05 Rude Tube** Alex Zane counts down the Top 50 online videos devoted to love and marriage. **3.00 Hollyoaks Omnibus** Ziggy and Celine find Ste sleeping outside after another binge and rush him to hospital, while Reenie receives an invitation to Derek's wedding. (R) **5.10 Location, Location, Location** Two families who were selling up to fund a business. (R)

3.15 Diana (2013) Premiere. Fact-based drama, starring Naomi Watts and Naveen Andrews. *****

5.05 One Chance (2013) Premiere. Fact-based comedy drama, starring James Corden. *******

7.05 Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud Iain Lee presents Christmas-themed videos that have taken the internet by storm in a seasonal special showcasing hilarious online clips with a festive twist. (R)

8.05 Chas & Dave's Xmas Knees Up! Festive entertainment from 1982, which sees the Cockney duo joined by celebrity guests Eric Clapton, Jimmy Crichton, Jim Davidson, Albert Lee and Lennie Peters. (R)

9.00 Football League Tonight: Boxing Day Special Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the packed Boxing Day fixture list, including Hull City v Burnley and Derby County v Fulham in the Championship.

10.30 Most Shocking Christmas Moments A merry romp through the most inappropriate, outrageous and appallingly atrocious Christmas television turkeys of all time, featuring contributions from some of those involved.

12.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Christmas Special The world of debt collection during the festive period. (R) **1.25 SuperCasino** Live interactive gaming. **3.10 Kids' Hospital at Christmas: Revisited** Catching up with the six children who featured in the series. (R) **4.00 Chris Tarrant on the Polar Express** Chris embarks on a 2,000-mile railway trip from Moscow to Arctic Siberia. (R) **4.50 Make It Big** The raffle money goes missing. (R) **5.15 Make It Big** First episode of the reality show following 12 young entrepreneurs. (R) **5.45 Angels of Jarm** (R) **5.50 Angels of Jarm Bindi** is jealous of Jess's new coat. (R)



Merry Christmas

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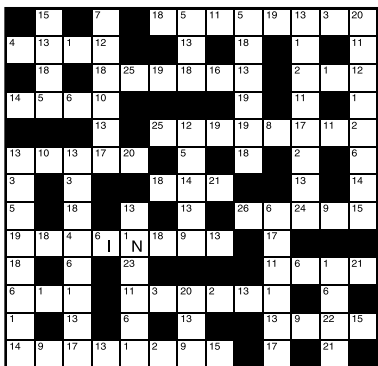


Wishing you Christmas Cheer

BRAIN GYM No.357

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	N	14
2		15
3		16
4		17
5		18
6	I	19
7		20
8		21
9		22
10		23
11		24
12		25
13		26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

X	U	A	K	H	Z	F	Y	P	R	C	W	D
J	T	I	B	Q	V	E	L	N	G	O	M	S

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

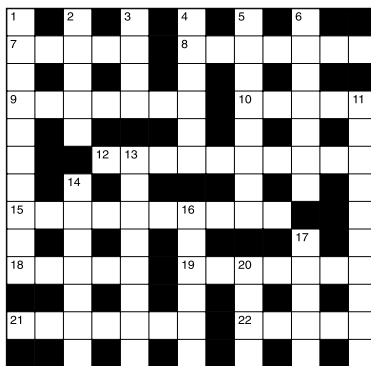
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Jovial fellow right for cutting (5)
- Ashamed - got rid of a graduate (7)
- Practised player gets well-used set of cards (3,4)
- The chosen beginning of a power source (5)
- Give way and tolerate a team (5,5)
- It's unlikely that one politician can wear a gown (10)
- There will be some on the staff, of course (5)
- Dissipated sea-creature joins the air force (7)
- Grimly holding the back end of the ship? (7)
- It's more pleasant right by French resort (5)

Down

- Pardon graduate getting up to answer (10)
- Vehicles containing 500 pieces for game (5)
- Gamble on article from the Greek alphabet (4)
- Irritate mother animal going up to lair (6)
- Game played at HQ dance (8)
- I re-echo such a greeting (7)
- Be comforted in that place twice (5,5)
- A large number of old-fashioned pronouns also (8)
- Picked out rashly, so to speak? (7)
- Dresses youth leader in tapestry (6)
- Black, sticky stuff suitable for playing games on (5)
- An excellent punishment (4)



Quick Clues:

Across

- Drive (5)
- Egg white (7)
- Food (7)
- Drift (5)
- Belligerent (10)
- Generous (4-6)
- Shade (5)
- Nomad (7)
- Yield (7)
- Reject scornfully (5)

Down

- Uneasiness (10)
- Foam (5)
- Too (4)
- Transmit (4,2)
- Impediment (8)
- Sovereign (7)
- Dissatisfaction (10)
- Ignored (8)
- Signification (7)
- Figure (6)
- Compass (5)
- Pant (4)

Sudoku

		2		4		9		3
		6	1				4	
9					5			6
	6				7		9	
3				1				2
8	9	2		3				7
8		3						9
6	7				1	8	6	
			5		2			7

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

6	4	5	1	8	9	7	2	3
6	7	9	4	2	3	6	1	5
3	1	2	5	6	7	4	8	9
1	3	6	7	9	2	8	5	4
9	5	7	6	4	8	2	3	1
2	8	4	3	1	5	9	6	7
4	2	8	9	5	1	3	7	6
5	9	3	8	7	6	1	4	2
7	6	1	2	3	4	5	9	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Enable; 8 Matter; 10 Outside; 11 Avoid; 12 None; 13 Stole; 17 David; 18 Vote; 22 Least; 23 Outpost; 24 Strife; 25 Cutler. Down: 1 Resound; 2 Casting 3 Plain; 4 Capable; 5 Stood; 6 Bride; 9 Test pilot; 14 Mastiff; 15 Monocle; 16 Letters; 19 Class; 20 Harry; 21 Stout. QUICK - Across: 7 Return; 8 Quiver; 10 Diction; 11 Forge; 12 Club; 13 Grain; 17 Slide; 18 Gain; 22 Maxim; 23 Explain; 24 Clergy; 25 Joyous. Down: 1 Produce; 2 Stuck-up; 3 Krait; 4 Surfeit; 5 Avert; 6 Greed; 9 Unbridled; 14 Plumage; 15 Paragon; 16 Oneness; 19 Smack; 20 Expel; 21 Spool.

Quiz

- Who was the Leader of the House of Commons from 1976-9?
- In which country is the Athos peninsula?
- Who was the companion of Don Quixote?
- In which two months are the Dog-days?
- To which crop is the Colorado Beetle a serious pest?
- What is the gnu also known as?
- Of what family is the Guinea-Pig a member?
- How many gallons did a kilderkin once represent?
- Which is the brightest of the planets?
- In which country is Innsbruck?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Exodus; 2 The Tempest; 3 1965; 4

Klaus Barbie; 5 25; 6 June 6th;

7 Jane Austen; 8 Canada; 9 Czech;

10 Painting.

Niner: SECTIONAL

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

456298 gives a dance,
1534 gives a movie,
4785699 gives a performance.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Definitely worth a visit – Spices, Walsall Road, Bridgtown, Cannock



The spacious interior has comfortable seating



Manager Ali, left pictured with Head Chef Anwar at Spices

New restaurant where menu variety was definitely the Spice of life for my family

IT'S always a shame when a long-standing pub shuts down – and these days it happens all too frequently.

But sometimes a successful, new venture fills the void. And that is exactly what Spices Restaurant has done in Bridgtown, Cannock.

Its former presence as a pub has not been completely forgotten, though. The Bridgtown Tavern – with an 'e' unlike the village it stands in – was a popular local, but after its unexpected closure around three years ago, Syed Ali stepped in to turn it into an Indian restaurant.

Ali already runs restaurants in Sedgley and Wednesbury but when the Cannock area was

suggested, he was not put off by the plethora of eateries already in the area.

"I know there were a lot of restaurants, but that means there are a lot of eaters," he said.

Cleverly, though, while identifying the need to cater for a growing clientele, he has steered clear of the main cluster of restaurants, thus avoiding where his main competition would be.

Beams

Spices lies on a main road through the village, ideal for passing trade but far enough away from the town centre saturation.

Some of the pub's old features remain, though, including the centrepiece bar. It is because of this that the interior doesn't have that feel of a contemporary diner – and it's all the better for it.

Alterations have been made of course, but

MARK SHIPP tucks in

the exposed brickwork and beams give it a more homely feeling. Tables are set out to cater for parties of diners, or families, and it is this set up that Ali, as he prefers to be known, prides his operation on.

I dined with my family, and truth to be told, it was an evening that money couldn't buy. We had proper conversations, we could hear ourselves talk. There were other diners, but no-one too loud or boisterous – and, where else could you dine out to a background soundtrack that included Stevie Wonder, The Three Degrees and Simply Red? Not all my cup of tea, but certainly an eclectic mix.

Ali and his staff, there are 14 employed in all, took time out to chat to us and check everything was okay, while being fully aware

that other diners needed attention, too. What's more the food was enjoyed by all four of us. From a menu that featured a seemingly endless list of Spices exclusives and recommended dishes like the khunda, the choice was certainly extensive.

Perfect

Ali spoke highly of his team of chefs, who like to add new lines on a regular basis and welcome comments from customers on favoured or requested dishes. They didn't let us down here.

Now I wouldn't say a fish dish is my favourite curry, but to quote the legendary philosopher Brian Clough "it's in the top one." I was in my element here as I was allowed to try two, the mach palak – pan-fried sea bass fillets in a medium sauce with spinach and potatoes,

complemented by lemon rice and naan bread, and the kanda wala machli, fish cooked in a lemon and coriander sauce. It's easy to say when being looked after for the purpose of a review that everything was OK. Often little things go wrong or not something is not quite right. It's human nature. However, this was a night when absolutely everything was perfect.

A more pleasant 'mein host' you could not wish to meet, in impressive surroundings, with a just-right atmosphere and terrific food.

It seems that Ali has it spot-on, and his regular diners – he caters for 70 but that can be extended – are proof of the quality served up.

For the record, the better half's makani chicken and the children's tikka masala and chips were well received, too.

Spices is open from 5.30 to 11pm between Tuesday and Sunday. Call 01543 502767.



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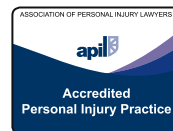
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DRIVETIME



Mini World Live show dates

One of the most exciting and interactive events dedicated to the most iconic small car in Britain is set to return to the calendar in 2016, with Mini World Live promising to be even bigger and better than the show's debut earlier this year.

The initial event was deemed a great success, attracting hundreds of beautifully restored classics, modified performance cars and the UK's leading Mini specialists and experts to Rockingham Motor Speedway.

Thousands of Mini enthusiasts made their way to the Northants venue for the first ever Mini World Live, and that number looks set to grow further, with the organisers promising even more action and more of a festival feel for the show, which is backed by three major Mini-related magazine titles - MiniWorld, Mini Magazine and Modern MINI.

The show will feature attractions catering for fans of both classic and modern Minis, including a huge retail village, show and shine areas, club displays and on-track action, the details of which will be confirmed nearer to the date.

Live music and refreshments will also form a core part of the event, with

camping available the evening before to ensure it benefits from a vibrant, festival feel.

Event manager Kat Chappell said: "Mini owners are renowned for loving a good show, so it was great to see Mini World Live get such a great reception in its first year. We now have a place in the calendar and are delighted that the event has become one of the major 'go-to' events for fans of both classic and modern Minis. We can't wait to grow it further this year."

Full details of the show, the cars and the various activities will be announced nearer the date, on the event website, or via the official Facebook page and twitter feeds.

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A desirable SUV with very clever technology

By Matt Joy

Audi is stepping up its provision of electric cars with a dual-power version of its Q7 SUV, but does it offer any worthwhile advantages over the regular model?

The second-generation Q7 hasn't even reached its first birthday, but there's a new version just around the corner. Lighter, stiffer and packed with more technology than ever before, the new Q7 is exactly the kind of car that big Audi buyers are looking for. But this e-tron version is something altogether different.

Mixing diesel power with electric motors, the Q7 e-tron is a plug-in hybrid promising exceptional fuel consumption and emissions alongside similar performance, similar pricing and barely diminished practicality, although it still has to compete with the overall excellence of the standard car.

To look at, there's nothing to distinguish the electric Q7 from its combustion-only counterpart. If you're really paying attention, you may notice the additional filler flap, but the e-tron is as chunky and prestigious as the standard car. It's a matter of taste of course, but the Q7 has plenty of presence.

On the image front, Audi has always been strong, and while emissions issues may have had a negative effect, what better way to move on from that than with an SUV that can run on just electric power?

The Q7 e-tron is unquestionably a sizeable car, but in e-tron guise there are a couple of compromises. The substantial battery pack sits in the boot where the third row of seats would normally sit, so the Q7 e-tron is a five-seater only, although you still get the flexibility of individual chairs in the second row that can slide and fold. The boot space is also reduced as a result, but there's still a sizeable 650 litres on offer with the seats in place.

The cabin itself is as spacious and comfortable as the standard Q7, with generous space front and rear as well as excellent materials. The Q7's virtual cockpit comes into its own here too, giving you a full update on what the complex power train is up to.

Complex it may be, but the Q7 makes life easy for you where driving is concerned. Defaulting to electric mode on start-up, acceleration from rest is smooth, near-silent and usefully brisk considering its size.

There are four operation modes to choose from; EV mode, hybrid, battery save where the charge stays unused until you request it and battery charge, where the engine will charge the battery whilst you drive.

So far it's as with most other plug-in hybrids, but the Q7 has another trick up its sleeve. You can leave it in hybrid and it will engage the battery, the diesel engine or both depending on how you drive but if you use the sat nav Predictive Assistant will determine what combination to use based on the road – and even the traffic – in the miles ahead.

As the driver all you notice is that this Q7 is even quieter than the standard car, and while the increased weight might mean it's not quite as quick or quite so agile, the potential economy results are worth the small sacrifice.

On the one hand the Q7 in e-tron form is significantly more expensive than a comparable diesel model, but that extra outlay brings with it a number of significant advantages. As well as being obviously cleaner and greener than a standard diesel it qualifies for the Government's £5,000 grant, will pay no vehicle excise duty or London congestion charge. It would also bring substantial BIK savings for company car buyers.

Not everyone needs so much space and comfort of course so there are smaller plug-in hybrids and conventional electric cars that can be as frugal, but no rival can offer the same combination of comfort, space, luxury and economy all at the same time. Company car drivers will love it, families with the funds will love it too and active lifestyle types with a conscious might not balk at the idea either. It's clever technology that is well executed and installed in a useful and desirable SUV.

This car summed up in a single word: Gamechanger. If this car was a car of the future in 1980, it wouldn't have been thought possible.



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DRIVETIME

Tivoli proved very pleasant



A smattering of Spanish would have come in handy in deepest Bedfordshire as we tried to tell the SsangYong's sat nav to take us back to base.

Someone had set the system for the land of paella and siestas and instructions came out of the Tivoli's dashboard with a softly spoken southern inflection, which sounded lovely but meant precious little.

But you don't keep a motoring writer from his lunch and the destination was eventually plumbed into the TomTom and away we went – in a car that was proving a bit of a surprise. Taking us on the mystery tour of an unheralded but handsome part of middle England was the latest model of a car you probably haven't heard of yet – the SsangYong Tivoli.

Built in South Korea by a company known until now for its range of tough but basic machines, many with an off-road potential, the Tivoli marks a serious move towards European respectability, where mere cheapness doesn't always succeed.

A decade or so ago a couple of other Koreans – Hyundai and Kia – began their climb upmarket and have succeeded beyond perhaps even their dreams. Can SsangYong do it too?

The earlier Tivoli versions, arriving mid-2015 made a firm case for a positive answer – 'yes!' – and at prices that start at £12,950 for a front-driver with petrol engine. Which makes it great value rather than a steal; often a sign that makers reckons their cars are now good enough to entice buyers without needing a bargain basement price tag.

SsangYong was right; the first Tivolis were decent enough to drive and very well kitted out for the money.

They also felt better put together (on the inside in particular) than opposition selling for more.

But what about a Tivoli selling for more than £20,000 when you've added metallic paint (£500) and a £400 styling pack with fancy alloys, black roof, spoiler and door mirrors? That's moving the car deep into the European main-

stream, where you'll find a host of smart cars looking for style-savvy buyers.

Well, driving is believing and SsangYong has a winner on its hands, so long as it can persuade you to sit in the car and then take it for a drive. Should your route take in a deep waterhole and a couple of crazily angled slopes, the admiration factor will ramp up quickly. For here is a car that genuinely surprised in places no sane owner will ever take it. A winter's drive home on snowy roads is going to be chicken feed for this newest version of the Tivoli. The all-wheel drive system puts all the power through the front wheels until it detects slippage, when the rears are instantly brought into action. This ought to mean better fuel economy than in a car with all the wheels working all the time.

You can have a six-speed manual gearbox or an automatic unit in your Tivoli 4x4 but both will be powered by the same 1.6 diesel engine that became an option in the 2WD range some months ago. It produces 113bhp, enough for 107mph top speed with the auto box and the sprint to 62mph in 12.3 seconds (109mph/12.0 seconds for the manual), with the auto 'box hitting emissions and fuel consumption, so that the figures of 156g/km and 47.9mpg average look underwhelming – stick to the DIY gearbox and things improve to 123g/km and 60.1mpg.

Out on proper road surfaces the diesel auto 4x4 Tivoli hums along nicely, allowing you to admire its fit and finish and start to take in the goodies that this top version has on board.

Standard kit on the ELX includes satellite navigation (Spanish is optional!), a superbly clear reversing camera, leather upholstery and heated front seats, climate control, keyless entry and start, auto dipping interior mirror, cruise control and (hurrah), a space saver spare wheel.

The ELX 4x4 auto costs £19,500, a six-speed manual is £1,000 less and the EX 4x4 diesel with a bit less kit is £17,100.

SsangYong thinks 500 people will take a Tivoli 4x4 in 2016. They may be surprised, especially if they can persuade showroom visitors to take a drive.



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visit:

www.myfamilyannouncements.
co.uk/expressandstar

**HARRISON
Patrick
Pat**

A more prominent Brother-in-
Law is hard to find, someone
to call on with a practical
mind.

Will be missed by all, so
caring and kind.

Eirwen, Mike, Chris, Gav and
All the Family.

Brother-in-Law

Your life was full of loving
deeds, always thoughtful of
others needs.

Rest in Peace Pat.

A cherished Brother-in-Law
and loyal Friend to Gill and
Ray, Uncle to Teresa, Gaenor
and Family.

X X X

Brother-in-Law

Fond memories of a sadly
missed Brother-in-Law and
Uncle.

Sleep tight Pat.

Love Eve and Family.

**HARRISON
Patrick**

A golden heart stopped
beating, hard working hands
at rest, God broke our hearts
to prove to us, He only takes
the best.

Always in our thoughts from
Danny, Val, Nick and Lisa.

in memoriam

**MYRING
Yvonne**
26.12.2012

A silent thought a secret tear,
we keep your memory forever
near.

Devoted Husband Colin,
Phillip, Paul, Demi Brandon
and Kelly.

**MYRING
Yvonne**

Three years on December 26,
2015.

Sunshine passes, shadows fall
but memories of you outlast
them all.

God bless.

Love, Kay.

X X

**AINGER
Aaron**

Our wonderful Son

April 7, 1988 to December 27,
2008.

If we could have one more
lifetime wish, one dream that
could come true, we'd ask
with all our hearts, for
yesterday and you.

Aaron, we love and miss you
every second of every day,
that love will bind us for
eternity.

Love Mum and Jed.

Our Brother

Seven years without you. It
has and never will be the
same. It feels like a lifetime
since we got to tell you we love
you.

Christmas is not Christmas
without you.

Always in our hearts, little big
man.

Love you always, Merry
Christmas,

Love, Elise and Theo.

Aaron

December 27.

You are not just a memory, or
part of the past, you are ours
to remember as long as life
lasts.

A bond so strong it will not go
away because we love and
miss you more each day.

Love, brokenhearted Nan and
Grandad Till.

X X

His light shines on.

Aaron

Another sad year without you
Aaron but you are always in
our thoughts and in the
thread of our lives.

With love and remembrance
from Viv, Karen and John.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENT

DEADLINES OVER CHRISTMAS

Please note that the deadline
for our weekly Cannock
Chronicle for Thursday,
December 24, is Wednesday,
December 16, at 4pm and for
Thursday, December 31, the
deadline is Friday, December
18, at 4pm.



Family Announcements Here to share your Todays, Tomorrows and Yesterdays

Whether you're celebrating a
special occasion or
remembering a loved one —
we're here to help.

**Just call us on
01902 317878**

Our lines are open between 8.30am
and 5.30 pm Monday to Friday.
Closed Saturdays

DAILY DEADLINES

*Before 4.00 pm Monday to Friday
for the next day's edition.
Before 4.30 pm Friday for Monday.
*Subject to change Bank Holidays.



Classified Ads

Buy Local, Sell Local

Index

- 1 Family
- 2 Leisure Time
- 3 Home & Services
- 4 Pets & Animals
- 5 Business & Farming
- 6 Property
- 7 Jobs
- 8 Motoring
- 9 Local Information
- 10 Personals

Free Ads

IT'S FREE IT'S EASY

For items up to £250

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Simply press the free ad icon.
Sorry, no pets, guns or livestock.
Private advertisers only.

Telephone line opening times over the festive period.

Monday, December 21	8.30am till 5.30pm
Tuesday, December 22	8.30am till 5.30pm
Wednesday, December 23	8.30am till 5.30pm
Christmas Eve December 24	8.30am till 1pm
Christmas Day December 25	Closed
Boxing Day Saturday December 26	Closed
Monday, December 28	Closed
Tuesday, December 29	8.30am till 5.30pm
Wednesday, December 30	8.30am till 5.30pm
New Years Eve December 31	8.30am till 1pm
New Years Day, Friday January 1	Closed
Saturday, January 2	Closed

Please note that our deadlines will be subject to change considerably over the Christmas period. Please call 01902 317 878 for any further information.

1 Family

elderly & disabled

WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned lifts from £799. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

2 Leisure Time

bikes

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car boot sales

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NOW ON B4176, Rabbit Run, WV15 5LS
by T.F.M. between Dudley & Telford
07890 267041

caravans / motorhomes

BLUE CROSS SALE starts Boxing Day, caravans from £995 inc 2016 fees, 12mth season amazing facilities close Borth beach, pet friendly. Save £££'s Text/call 07494 396264

FOR SALE 2 BED CARAVAN, stunning park, 12 month season. Lots of family facilities, dog friendly, immaculate condition, quiet pitch. Paul 07960 944721 for more info.

STATIC CARAVAN WILBERY, Keirall 35x12, with decking, Borth SY24 5JU. Bargain at £995. 07462 343 698

3 BED CARAVAN for sale in Borth. Stunning condition throughout with all fees/contents inc. pool, bars and nightly entertainment with 12 month season. Call Cari 07837 489013.

sports & leisure

PING RAPTURE Set, irons, putter, woods and bag. Excellent condition, suitable gift. Superb. £350. Stafford 01785 214253

holidays

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devon

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3 Home & Services

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HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

ASH RECLAMATION new and used building materials, upvc doors and windows 01543 453222.

CHEAP INDIAN SANDSTONE paving from £15.50 per square metre including vat. Choice of colours. Ranton Building Supplies LTD 01543 276006

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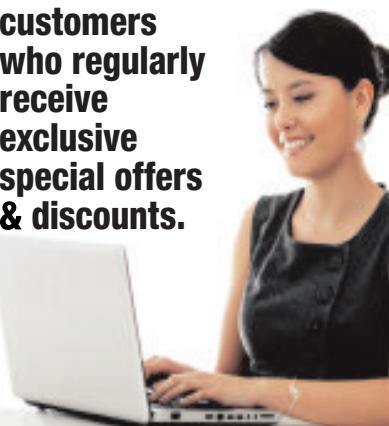
antiques

ANTIQUES WANTED
All Furniture, Clocks, China, Medals, Coins, Paintings, Gold & Silver Jewellery
HOUSE CLEARANCE SERVICE
CHASE ANTIQUES
(Over 35 years Trading)
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Classified Ads

items wanted

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Moorcroft • Dladro • Old coins
• Watches • Costume Jewellery • Old toys
• Clocks • Paintings • ALL SILVER
• All Chinese items • All Oriental items
Pre'47 silver coins All war medals etc
ANYTHING OLD & INTERESTING
01922 495066 or 07971 783206

HOUSE CLEARANCES Coins, Medals, Records and Eric A Brac. The Curio Shop, 61 George Street, Walsall, WS1 1RS. 07941 596254

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

WANTED MINI Series A engine, must be in working order. Walsall 01922 636698.

in your garden

SAND, TOPSOIL, DECORATIVE gravels 11 Tonne direct loads at cheap rates. D. Hill Building & Garden Supplies 01922 452221/452266 7 days.

SLABS 450mm x 450mm Riven faced, only £1.76 inc. VAT. Ranton Building Supplies: 01543 276006.

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t.v. / home entertainment

service

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specialists at your service

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VISA 01543 439095
01922 716029
07833 738857

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plumbing & heating

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81543 889887

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4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

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guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

pets corner

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Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

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vets

Express & Star

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5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

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business directory

business opportunities

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6

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Studios from £30pw
Includes Most Bills
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jaccommodation.com

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overseas property

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7

Jobs

hotel & catering

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Due to re-structure the Golf Club is seeking an energetic and self motivated person to manage all daily Clubhouse services throughout the bar and catering area of the club. Please apply in writing with C.V or email
lenny@whittingtonheathgc.co.uk for further information.
Mrs J A Burton
Whittington Heath Golf Club
Tamworth Road, Lichfield
Staffordshire WS14 9PW

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8

Motoring

cars over £1500

MINI COOPER S, grey, 2005, 12 months MoT, low mileage, FSH, showroom condition, £1,995 bargain. 7503 670510.

cars under £1500

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

FORD KA V Regn, blk, 12 months MoT, 61,000 miles, 4 service stamps, Good condition great little car. £400. 07976 283894.

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VAUXHALL CORSA 2003 reg, lady owner, 12 months MoT, clean and tidy, very reliable, first to see will buy. £500. 0121 601 6313.

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MONMORE RD, WV1 2TZ

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9

Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
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10

Personals

personal

ALONE? OVER 35? Friendship/ Companionship. 01432 355144 www.janestephensbureau.co.uk

Aerials

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2 E-mail us at... Sarah.winfield.jones@expressandstar.co.uk
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Local Specialists



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Blues come away from Preston with another draw

Preston NE 1 Blues 1

PRESTON and Blues shared the spoils in an entertaining 1-1 draw at Deepdale as Michael Morrison scuppered the hosts' hopes of another clean sheet.

Simon Grayson's men claimed a first-half lead through loanee Adam Reach's cross-cum-shot and spent the second period fending off wave after wave of attacks.

North End were bidding for their ninth shut-out in 11 games and their 13th of the season – and a series of saves from impressive on-loan goalkeeper Jordan Pickford looked like delivering it.

But skipper Morrison's near-post header from a 67th-minute corner brought Blues level and Demarai Gray should have then won it when he raced through and dragged wide in stoppage time.

Reach's first goal since he moved on loan from Middlesbrough arrived in the 19th minute and there was a degree of fortune involved.

The winger appeared to be delivering a cross from the right flank, but the ball eluded everyone and bounced into the far corner of Tomasz Kuszczak's net.

Joe Garner stung Kuszczak's palms from the edge of the area and ex-Villa man Daniel Johnson surged forward from midfield before dragging an effort into the Pole's body.

Morrison's header from Stephen Gleeson's corner went over the line at the far post before Vermijl was able to volley clear, with the assistant referee immediately flagging for a goal.

Neither side looked content with a point, Joe Garner and Reach both misfiring.

Gabby's days at Villa look numbered

GABBY AGBONLAHOR'S days at Villa could be numbered with the club open to offers for the 29-year-old forward in January.

The club captain hasn't scored for nine months and didn't feature in the squad for their defeat against Arsenal.

Agbonlahor has struggled to impress new manager Remi Garde and if the Frenchman receives the right offer, Villa's longest-serving player looks likely to be out of the door.

After coming through the youth ranks, Agbonlahor made his debut for Villa in 2006 at the age of 19.

He won three England caps in 2008 and 2009.

He's only scored 10 goals in the last two-and-a-half seasons.

Agbonlahor has made more than 300 appearances for Villa.

Jonas is hoping for a Euro reunion

JONAS OLSSON and James McClean hope the Swede's impressive performances will set up a Euro 2016 reunion between the team-mates.

Olsson's Sweden and McClean's Ireland have been drawn together in Group E for next year's competition in France.

The big Swede was a colossus at Anfield recently and capped off a fine defensive display with a goal in the 73rd minute.

But the big centre-half was left out of the Swedish squad for their European Championship play-off games against Denmark.

In fact he's only made one appearance for his country since July 2013, playing the full 90 minutes in an international friendly against Norway in June this year. "I was in the Euros four years ago and even if we didn't do as well as we hoped for, it was definitely the greatest few weeks of my career," said Olsson. "I really want to go again in the summer. Hopefully I do enough this season to be part of the team."

Sweden's first match is against the Republic of Ireland in the 81,000-seater Stade de France. The game is already being touted as a must-win for both sides because the other two countries in their group are world number one-ranked side Belgium, and traditional powerhouse Italy. "It's going to be a big one," admitted Olsson. "That's what it's about. Rise to the occasion. It's what you dreamt about as a little boy, to play the biggest stadiums in championships like that."

Olsson has won 25 caps for Sweden.

Like many international fringe players, this season has added importance with the championships in France looming. Olsson is 33 in March, and may not get another opportunity to reach a major tournament.

James McClean hopes he'll line up against his teammate in Paris. And he's not overly worried by the tough group. "We took four points against Germany so we're confident of qualifying beyond the first round," he said.

Change is gonna come, says Sinclair

NEW Hednesford Town boss Frank Sinclair insists things have got to change if the Pitmen are to improve their flailing league form.

Town are struggling in 18th in the National League North and former Chelsea hero Sinclair was given the job of turning around their fortunes when appointed.

He oversaw his side for the first time at Stalybridge Celtic.

Sinclair said: "We have to address the form of the team at the moment, it's one win in 11, the results aren't going the way the club would have liked.

"There's not a great deal of room for making wholesale changes.

"It can be tweaked a bit, which I'm looking to do. Certain things will have to change to improve.

"I'm confident that I can get the right players in if needed."

That one win, under former boss Bernard McNally, came against struggling Lowestoft Town, and Hednesford's festive run of games has them set to face a number of relegation rivals.

They entertain former boss Rob Smith's AFC Telford United on Boxing Day before the return fixture on January 2.

Sandwiched

And a trip to FC United of Manchester, who are only two points ahead, is sandwiched in the middle.

Sinclair is confident that he has enough experience of management to guide the Pitmen to safety.

"I've got enough experience at this level with Colwyn Bay," he said. "Both the chairman and the secretary knew what I was all about.

"I'm a very adaptable manager, you have to be at this level. I haven't got a certain style but I demand a professional approach – that's the way I've always worked.

"I'm honest, I'll pat people on the back when they need that, and when they need a rocket they'll get that as well."

The former Premier League defender also promised to entertain the Keys Park crowd with a stylish brand of football, but noted they would have to wise-up to the physical approach.

Joe could be called for England



Joe Hartshorne who is hoping for a call up to play for his country

A YOUNG Cannock footballer is one game away from being called up for England.

Already a Heath Hayes first team player at the age of 16, Joe Hartshorne faces a trial at Lilleshall at the start of the new year to make the last 18 of the English Schools FA squad.

The teenager is the youngest player to get this far and the only one from Staffordshire.

Hartshorne, a sixth former at Hednesford's Staffordshire University Academy, was first put forward for the county trials in July at Cardinal Griffin School in Cannock. After impressing there, Joe made an even bigger impression at the Midlands trials at Alfreton FC, scoring a hat-trick to give him the chance to try out for the England set up.

More than 70 players took part at Manchester City's training ground, where the hopefuls – Hartshorne included – were whittled down to the last 34. The final trials at the Shropshire site are on January 8, 9 and 10. He celebrates his 17th birthday a week later.

As well as representing Simon Davies' side in the Midland Combination, left winger Hartshorne has scored twice in two games in Staffordshire County games.

Speedway welcomes new clubs into fold

BRITISH Speedway's National League will welcome two new clubs in 2016.

The sport will return to the Isle of Wight's Smallbrook Stadium after a two-year absence with the newly branded Warriors.

And Belle Vue will enter a Colts team into the third tier based at their new home, the National Speedway Stadium in Manchester.

The news means 12 clubs will come to the tapes next season in what promises to be an exciting time for the league which encourages the development of young British riders.

Club bosses held their AGM at the British Speedway HQ in Warwickshire on Wednesday and they set a new team building limit of 40-points per club.

In a dramatic move they have also scrapped all tactical rides – and the league title will revert back to the play-off system involving the top four clubs at September 25.

Other key points were:

- National Trophy North: Birmingham, Buxton, Stoke, South: Isle of Wight, Kent, Mildenhall. Winners of each group to contest final.
- National League fixtures to be made available by late January to take into account those riders also involved in Elite League and Premier League meetings.
- Knockout Cup draw to be made before Christmas.
- Major Events: NL Fours – Coventry – Sunday August 14.
- NL Pairs – King's Lynn – Date TBC mid-summer.
- NLRC – new venue in September.

Khalsa squad on course for success

SPORTING KHALSA have proved every one wrong by being involved in the Midland Football League title race at Christmas, and will have a successful season whatever happens – according to boss Ian Rowe.

Khalsa are fourth in the table, nine points behind leaders Hereford but with four games in hand.

After a dip in form following their fourth qualifying round FA Cup heroics, Rowe's men have gone on a six-game winning run.

Rowe said: "I wouldn't say we're in the title race but the table doesn't lie. That's not being un-ambitious, I've said it's Hereford's league.

"We'll never try and compare with their crowds.

"I have a slim squad and we're struggling with injuries."

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Steve finds his focus in love of the game

FOR some time, Steve Staunton has been searching for focus.

Now, he thinks he's found it. Next autumn he will open a football academy, at Lichfield City FC, aimed at giving youngsters aged 16 to 18 another chance in the game.

Staunton sees it as an opportunity to give something back to the sport but it is impossible not to feel he will personally gain a renewed sense of purpose.

Since being sacked by Darlington, his second – and at this point last – managerial job, five-and-a-half years ago, the former Liverpool, Villa and Ireland defender has experienced life bouncing between scouting roles with no serious, long-term plan.

"I have been doing a bit of this and a bit of that," he says. "Nothing has really come up, it is getting harder and harder to get into football, whether it is as a manager or coach."

"This is on my terms."

"Does this give me focus? Absolutely. It's six years since I completed my pro licence and this keeps you ticking over."

"I would love to give these boys a chance to fall back in love with the game, enjoy yourself. I won't be easy on them but I will give them as near to as possible what a professional club will."

Staunton has never lost his passion since first arriving in England as a 17-year-old, after signing his first professional deal for Liverpool.

The Steve Staunton Football Academy is taking applications for September. Contact PTC Education on 01709 913600 or e-mail study@ptcgroup.co.uk

Youngsters lend a hand at Keys Park



The youngsters battled the cold to help out

HEDNESFORD TOWN have set out to encourage the next wave of supporters by asking schoolchildren to lend a hand on matchdays.

Twelve youngsters from Chadsmoor Primary School in Cannock were invited to Keys Park in a bid to get them involved in the non-league game.

They were ball boys during Hednesford's National League North game against AFC Fylde.

Despite the high winds, the boys all performed well and helped the

game flow for 90 minutes.

The Pitmen will hope that the keen youngsters return to the club as either supporters or volunteers in the future.

Scott Smith, Hednesford Town FC Supporters Association chairman, said: "The club would like to thank the boys, parents and staff of Chadsmoor Primary School for attending."

"We hope that they'll come back as regular supporters."

Town may have lost to Fylde, but the vibrant youngsters remained keen and were introduced to a number of the first-team squad.

Teacher Jeff Parkes and assistant head Mrs Kirby attended and noted: "The boys had a great visit."

"Hednesford may have lost but they all had a great time. The warm drink was most welcome!"

Anyone interested in bringing their school team or children's side to Keys Park as ball boys can call the club on 01543 422870.

Race plan in doubt after sponsor blow

A TWIN brother racing team face sitting out the 2016 season after a sponsorship blow threw their young race careers into jeopardy.

Twin brothers Kurt and Matt Wigley, who compete in the British Superbikes 600cc Superstocks Championships, will enter the New Year struggling to raise sufficient funds to get their bikes on the grid.

They have lost a number of sponsor deals in recent months and, after competing in the Superstock class for the past three seasons, could be without any form of biking in 2016.

The news may not only come as a blow to the 19-year-olds from Hednesford, but also keen mechanical engineers who, under the Wigley's brand, have been given first-hand experience as part of their race team.

One youngster become an apprentice at a suspension company while another, Josh Billingham, earned a place at Coventry University – where he studies motorsport.

News of the sponsorship blow could put paid to further hopes of podium success and career prospects.

Backwards

Kurt said: "It would definitely put us on a big backwards step, if we weren't racing."

"We've worked with several companies but, understandably, they all want different things. The marketing is one side of it and then there's our student project."

"The more sponsors we could get on board, the more it'll help fund having the kids on board when we travel to race."

"The lads we've had in have helped us no end and we give them the upper-hand in finding a career path."

The Wigley's are grateful to have been able to secure deals with Midland Plant Training & Testing, LAM Associates and Sorrymate.com.

But they hope to attract more interest which would enable them to confirm their place on the British Superbike paddock for next year.

Kurt also revealed the duo had planned on significantly expanding their student project, as they aim to give back to the community.

He added: "We aim to do more with the student project next year and increase the size of the



Twins Kurt and Matt Wigley, aged 19, who race Yamaha R6 motorbikes 600 Superstock Class

team that works alongside us at each of the British Superbike rounds. "The aim is to continue to develop young engineers who have a burning passion for motorsport and provide them the opportunity to play key roles in the team."

"This includes developing an understanding of suspension settings, calculating gear ratio and fuel consumptions, mechanical skills and much more that provides each member with valued work experience

at such a high sporting level. We assist students with getting on to a career pathway and improving a range of skills such as working as a team or an individual, paying attention to detail, communicating with colleagues, presenting themselves and the team in a professional manner and more."

"This project has already had a positive impact on many lives which is what we aim to continue and expand."

There will never be another George Best

THIS year Northern Ireland mourned the 10th anniversary of their greatest player's death.

George Best, who died at just 59 on November 25 2005, was an undisputed great – not only of his chosen sport, but of any sport.

Yet while his story – one of limitless skill, the best and worst excesses of celebrity and an ultimately fatal addiction to alcohol, still entrances – Best somehow failed to shine on the international stage.

At Manchester United the honours flowed – two league titles, the club's first ever European Cup, a Ballon d'Or and a highlights reel to match the best in history – but it was a curiosity that Best managed only 37 appearances and nine goals for Northern Ireland. Fewer caps than Niall McGinn, fewer strikes than Iain Dowie.

He is, without question, one of the finest players never to grace a major tournament. But his successors in the green shirt, after a 30-year absence, will do just that next summer after qualifying for Euro 2016.

Complications relating to a liver transplant denied Best the chance to share in the celebrations.

But Gerry Armstrong, a former team-mate, long-time friend and one of Best's pall-bearers, has no doubt what that would have meant to him.

"I can't believe it's 10 years since that awful day but it's amazing that it comes as Northern Ireland have just qualified for the European Championship," Armstrong said. "I know how proud George would have been about that. I just know he is somewhere up there looking down on us and

Sports score two to beat The Lockmen

Willenhall 0 Dudley Sports 2

WILLENHALL were left to rue missed chances as Dudley Sports twice caught them on the break in the second half to record a 2-0 win.

With injuries, suspensions, work and departures biting them hard, The Reds made a good start with several new signings looking particularly bright early on as two corners and a Dan Bryson header troubled Sports. Jordan Lovell looked bright going forward on the left, well supported by Jon Ashfall.

Ross Clarke mis-timed a tackle and was subsequently booked after a good advantage was played and the resulting cross was turned in by Craig Lewis on 69 minutes.

Two minutes into stoppage time, Machingauta broke at speed down the right and his cross was guided home by sub Anil Sunder.

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Salford are too strong for the Pics

Rushall 2 Salford City 3
FA Cup heroes Salford City left Dales Lane with three points following a win over Rushall Olympic.

The Pics started the game the better side and were unlucky not to be in front after Jack Duggan glanced a header over the bar and then Alex Reid saw his header saved superbly by Jay Lynch in the Salford goal.

Richie Allen missed a glorious chance for the away side when he seemed to shin James Poole's cross wide of the open goal from very close range.

Allen made amends for his miss after he put his side 1-0 up from 18 yards, firing in with his left foot after his initial shot rebounded back to him 30 minutes into the game.

Six minutes later and the visitors doubled their lead thanks to a defensive error from the Pics.

Aris Christophorou sold Dean Coleman short and Poole raced in to help the ball over the keeper and in. Jake Heath halved the deficit just five minutes into the second half when he fired into the far corner of the net.

But Salford's two-goal advantage was restored just five minutes after Heath's strike as Jordan Hulme ghosted in to slide another poor header back past Coleman to make it 3-1.

Substitute Danny Webber had the ball in the net again for Salford but the linesman's flag was up well in advance.

Olympic substitute Malachi Lavelle-Moore made it an interesting last nine minutes when he converted after Lynch parried Heath's shot.

Rushall Olympic: Coleman, Christophorou, Martin, Tolley, Duggan, Townsend, Heath, Taylor (Palmer 68), Benbow, Brown (Lavelle-Moore 68), Reid. Subs not used: Caines, Wilkinson, Craner

Hayes end their year with a solid win over Southam

Heath Hayes 3 Southam 0
HEATH Hayes signed off for 2015 with a comfortable Midland League Division One win over lowly Southam.

In an entertaining first half both teams served up some attractive football despite the tricky conditions.

Hayes went close to opening the scoring on 12 minutes when a well-placed Joe Pickering free-kick struck a post before being scrambled clear. At the other end Mark Wiggins made a smart save to deny Tom O'Callaghan.

The deadlock was broken on 28 minutes. A deep cross from the left by John Littler caught the visitors' defence off guard and the alert Joe Hartshorne slid the ball home. Liam Degville then headed home to put the home side 2-0 up at the break.

The second half began with a fine run by Hartshorne who picked the ball up inside his own half and cut through the Southam defence with a mazy run only to be denied a goal by a last-ditch clearance by Paul Godnan.

Dimitri Dunkley deservedly got his first goal for the club.

Pitman Frank has whirlwind of a day



Frank Sinclair, Dennis Wise and Roberto Di Matteo

HE TOOK a first phonecall from the chairman at 9am – and 10 hours later he was overseeing his first training session having been appointed as manager of Hednesford Town.

That's what you call a whirlwind appointment for former Premier League and international defender Frank Sinclair.

The ex-Chelsea and Leicester City man was installed at Keys Park just hours after Bernard McNally was sacked, with club legend Chris Brindley also leaving the club.

Sinclair won the FA Cup and the League Cup during a playing career that included more than

Football

10 years in the Premier League and a trip to the World Cup with Jamaica.

But he has also accrued plenty of non-league experience with Wrexham, Hendon, Colwyn Bay and Brackley Town, the latter two as both player and manager – experience he'll need with the Pitmen struggling in 18th in National League North.

"I've got experience of this league, I know the teams and I know what it's all about," Sinclair said. "Survival and consolidation is the aim this season and then hopefully push on next season."

A BAPTISM OF FIRE FOR BOSS

Stalybridge Celtic 4 Hednesford 2
NEW boss Frank Sinclair suffered a heavy defeat in his first game in charge of Hednesford Town.

With the blustery conditions in their favour for the first half, the Pitmen were immediately on the attack in the Conference North clash.

A searching cross into the area by Tom Peers was just out the reach of Kyle Perry.

Paul Ennis also combined well with Perry in the ninth minute but the resultant effort by the big striker cleared the bar.

A minute later, the visitors had a good penalty shout rejected by the referee when Sean Williams appeared to be impeded after a good exchange with Perry.

A rare sortie by Stalybridge into Hednesford territory resulted in a long throw into the area which was not cleared but the final shot cleared the bar.

Responded

The Pitmen responded immediately and, on 19 minutes, Peers found some space in the penalty area to turn and tuck the ball into the bottom corner with a smart left-foot finish.

With the Pitmen well in the ascendancy, further chances fell to Sean Williams and Ennis but, as the game entered first half added time, the visitors were caught on the break.

Sean Williams was tackled on the edge of the Stalybridge penalty area and the ball was swept upfield for Danny Burns to score and draw the home side level at the break.

As the second half got under way the home side started with more purpose and, after a short spell of pressure, some poor defending allowed Dale Wright to score off the underside of the crossbar, leaving Dan Crane with little chance.

For the Pitmen, Sean Williams went close on 64 minutes when his free-kick took a slight deflection off the wall and crashed off the crossbar.

The introduction of Adam Thomas and Ahmed Obeng from the bench increased the attacking options for the Pitmen and some good play between those two down the right in the 74th minute resulted in a cross into the six-yard box for Perry to



Tom Peers attacks the Stalybridge defence during the first match with their new manager

tap home but the goal was ruled out for an earlier offside flag.

As the game continued to swing back and forth it was only a minute later that a cross into the Hednesford area from Bohan Dixon took a deflection and looped over to the far post for Adam Farrell to head home unchallenged.

With full-time approaching the Hednesford defence was, once again, breached as they failed to adequately clear a corner with the ball falling to centre-half John Shaw to chip home.

In the 88th minute the Pitmen, scored a consolation goal when a free-kick to the far post was headed in by young centre-half Tyrone Williams.

After a very promising first half in which the Pitmen played with style and confidence, the defensive frailties that have dogged the team all season came to the fore and this will surely be Sinclair's priority for improvement in forthcoming games.

Stalybridge Celtic: McMillan, Wylie, Crowley, Hughes, Shaw, Chalmers, Burns (Chippendale 68), Wright, Farrell (Simm 79), Tames (Osei 72), Dixon. Subs not used: Johnson, Lingouba

Hednesford Town: Crane, Disney (Thomas 51), Regan (James 72), Bailey(C), T. Williams, Digie, Peers, S. Williams, Perry, Ennis (Obeng 59), Trainer. Subs not used: Ransome, Todd.

Scholars get third home win in a row

Chasetown 2 Gresley 1

IT WAS not a Christmas cracker but Chasetown secured their third home league victory in a row with a Ryan Wynter goal which saw them come out the victors over Gresley.

The Scholars took the lead inside six minutes when Simon Brown sent a free-kick to the far post and Danny Edwards, who was on his 50th league appearance for the club, looped a header back over goalkeeper Robert Peet.

Gresley had a goal disallowed for off-side before they had the perfect opportunity to level, however a superb diving save from John Bateman kept out Gary Ricketts' penalty.

A scrappy first half petered out at 1-0 until the visitors levelled with a superb Jack Langston free-kick five minutes after the restart.

The sides weren't level long though as a minute later Paul Sullivan's ball into the near post was volleyed home by Wynter which brought his goal tally for the season to nine.

Langston almost levelled again with a second free-kick in the match before the visitors were reduced to 10 men when Ricketts received his marching orders for what the referee deemed a dangerous tackle.

Sullivan wasted a great chance to make it 3-1 and really put the game away for the Scholars when his effort was blocked by a defender on the line.

The Derbyshire side were further reduced when they saw red for a second time as Jean Dakouri was sent off for a second bookable offence.

Chasetown: Bateman, Thompson, Edwards, Dance, Eze, Brown, Mugisha, Davies, Wynter (Turtton, 71), Sullivan (Slater, 81), Washbourne (Gould, 62). Subs not used: Francis, Robinson

Goalkeeper Foster back in training

ALBION keeper Ben Foster is back in training after nearly eight months out with a knee injury.

The England shot-stopper returned to training with the rest of the squad.

It is hoped the 32-year-old could be challenging for a return to the side within two or three weeks.

However, he will face a fight with goal-keeping incumbent Boaz Myhill who has been impressing between the posts in Foster's absence.

Foster damaged his cruciate ligament in March and was originally pencilled in to return in October but suffered a setback during the autumn.

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